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UNCLE TOM TALKING TO THE CHILDREN.

UNCLE PHILLIPS,

CONVERSATIONS

WITH

YOUNG PERSONS.



NEW YORK.

HARPER & BROTHERS, 82, CHAMBERS ST.

1854.

EVIDENCES
OF
CHRISTIANITY;

OR,

UNCLE PHILIP'S CONVERSATIONS

WITH

THE CHILDREN ABOUT THE TRUTH OF THE CHRISTIAN
RELIGION.

DESIGNED FOR SUNDAY READING AND SUNDAY-SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

[Hawkes, Francis Lester]

NEW-YORK :

PUBLISHED BY HARPER & BROTHERS,
NO. 82 CLIFF-STREET.

1834.

W.M.

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TO THE
MESSRS. HARPERS, IN NEW-YORK.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:—

As you thought that the children of our country were pleased with the little book which I sent you before, and therefore requested me to write out another and send it to you to print, I have complied with your wishes, and now send you our conversations on a very important subject,—that is, the Christian religion. I do not know whether our little friends will be as much pleased with this book as they were with the first: it is a different kind of book, but I think they can understand it, and I hope it will repay them for the trouble of reading it. It is nothing but an account of things which happened a long time since, with the proof that they did happen: and I think that children can understand proof very well, if it be made plain to them. You must let the children know that the girls come to see me now as well as the boys; and in this book, as they will see, I have talked to them all together. Be so good as to inform them, too, that we have had conversations on several other subjects, which I may perhaps send to you, if they wish them.

I received from you the letter which a little girl sent to you, desiring you to ask Uncle Philip to talk with the children about History. Tell

her that we have had a long conversation about Virginia, and another about New-York, and Massachusetts; and the children here are anxious to hear the history of their own country: so that before we stop, I suppose I shall be obliged to tell them the history of all the States; and, if you print them, the little girl who wrote the letter to you can read them. We have also had much conversation about the different kinds of trees which grow in America, and their uses; and perhaps the children would be pleased with that subject. Farewell, from your

UNCLE PHILIP.

Newtown, February 4th, 1834.

We have had a drawing made of our worthy old uncle, in his study, with the children around him; and we assure our little friends that the likeness of the old gentleman is as correct as any we ever saw of him.

THE PUBLISHERS.

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CONVERSATIONS
ON THE
EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

CONVERSATION I.

Uncle Philip comes home, and the Boys find a Subject for him to talk about. He tells them a Story.

“Ah! dear Uncle Philip; how glad we are to see you again. We knew that you had come back from New-York; and the very moment that school was dismissed, we ran off to see you.”

“Thank you, thank you, my dear boys; but how did you know that I had reached home?”

“Why, Charles Brown came into school and told us, that as he passed by your house he saw the windows open, and your old dog

Trusty lying by the gate ; and we knew that if Trusty was at home, Uncle Philip was not far off."

" Very good, boys : so much for taking notice that I and my dog are apt to be together. But where are the other boys ? Here are but three of you. I hope all my little friends are well."

" Oh, yes, very well ; and here they come. We ran faster than they did, that's all."

" Ah, I see them now : well, my dear children, how do you do ?"

" All well, Uncle Philip, and very happy to see you at home once more. We have longed for your return. Did you bring home the book about insects which you said you would get from your nephews ?"

" Yes, boys ; I brought that and a great many others besides, all of which we will read at our leisure : but here is one which I think it is not necessary for you to read, because you already know all that is in it."

" Let us see it, if you please, Uncle Philip. What is this ?—' Natural History, or Uncle Philip's Conversations with the Children about Tools and Trades among the Inferior Animals.' Why, Uncle Philip, this book has in it all that you said to us about animals

working ; and here are the very same pictures which you showed us. How did the Harpers know what you had said, so as to print it?"

"I wrote it for them, boys, in the hope that, when printed, it would please and instruct other little boys as much as it did you when I related to you what the book contains."

"Well, Uncle Philip, did you find out how the children liked it?"

"I did not inquire, boys ; but I was at the house of a friend, and heard a fine little boy (who did not know me) say, that he hoped Uncle Philip would soon send Mr. Harper another book of Conversations : and one day, in the street, I heard a little girl say to her father, 'Father, do you think Uncle Philip will be along this way again soon ?' That's all I heard."

"Well, Uncle Philip, if they do not like it, we do ; and so we hope that you will be ready to talk with us."

"Very ready, I assure you : but have you thought of a subject?"

"Yes, sir ; but before we name it, there is a favour we wish to ask."

"What is it ? I will grant it, if it be proper to do so."

"Some of us, Uncle Philip, have sisters;

and they have heard us say so much about you and your conversations with us, that they wish very much to come and listen to you. May they come?"

"Certainly, my dear boys; such of you as have sisters may bring them with you; and I like you the better for remembering their wishes, and making the request for them. A boy who neglects his sister, and is not willing to study her comfort and respectability, is not likely to gain the esteem of the wise and the good. I have known some such boys, and have watched them after they became men; and more than once have I remarked that they proved worthless: and therefore I am very glad to find that you are attentive to the wants of your sisters."

"Why, Uncle Philip, a boy who neglects his own sister must be mean."

"Very true. He certainly does not act as becomes a gentleman, and therefore he is mean. Now, boys, I would not have you lose sight of this; but there is a better reason still why a boy should not treat his sister with neglect; and it is the reason which we should always remember first."

"What is it, Uncle Philip?"

"The boy who does not remember that at-

tention, and kindness, and civility are due to his sisters does not act as a *Christian*. God has made them weaker than him ; in a great many things they are dependant on him for comfort ; and it is not only ungentlemanlike, but unchristian, for the stronger not to attend to the wishes and the wants of the weaker. Besides, benevolence and kindness are plain duties. Hand me that Bible, and let us see what our Saviour says. Here, read at this place, aloud."

" It says, Uncle Philip, '*Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself?*' But is my sister my neighbour ?"

" Do you not remember, when our Saviour was asked by the Jews, '*And who is my neighbour?*' he related the story of—"

" Oh ! yes, yes ; we remember now very well the story of the good Samaritan, who helped the wounded man, though he was a stranger to him. Ah, that is a beautiful story, Uncle Philip, and shows us that everybody is our neighbour."

" Certainly it does ; and therefore kindness is due to everybody. But now let me know what subjects you have thought of for our conversation."

"Why, we have thought that you could tell us many more things about animals than we have yet heard: and are there not very strange things about plants, and trees, and stones? We thought, too, that perhaps you would tell us of things you had seen in foreign countries."

"Well, all these are subjects which we might find to be very interesting."

"But, Uncle Philip, let me speak now, if you please. I have thought of something better than any which has been named."

"What is it, pray?"

"Why, the story of the good Samaritan brought it into my mind. I was thinking that there are a great many others too in that book quite as beautiful; and I have often heard you say that the Bible was the best of all books, and that it is true; and I was wishing to myself (but perhaps you will think me a foolish little boy for doing so), that I should like to hear you tell how you found out that all those interesting things about our Saviour are true."

"Why, do you not believe them?"

"Oh yes, surely I do; but it is because older and wiser people than I am have told me that, being true, I ought to believe them;

but if you think that we can understand the reasons for believing them, I, for one, would like to hear you talk about that."

"Oh yes, Uncle Philip! and so would all of us."

"Well, boys; it is right that you should believe what older and wiser people tell you; but there is nothing wrong in your wishing also to know for yourselves *why* you believe. And I am willing, too, to talk on this subject; but you must promise me, before I begin, that you will not grow weary, and will listen carefully; for close attention will be necessary, and with attention I think that you may easily understand all that I mean to say to you."

"We will be attentive, Uncle Philip."

"We must go too into my library, for we shall have to use a number of my books, and I shall show you also some pictures which are there; but I think we had better not begin this morning, as your sisters, you know, would like to be with us; and they are not here. So, as we have agreed that our subject is to be about the truth of the New Testament, we will do nothing more this morning. And now, will you put the Bible back again on the table?"

"I will, Uncle Philip."

"Thank you,—that will do ; and I am glad to see that you did not throw it down carelessly on the table. I think that the Word of God should always be handled with respect ; and I remember a story which I once read about that very thing. Would you like to hear it this morning before you go ?"

"Oh yes, Uncle Philip, if you please."

"The story was about a young king of England, boys, whose name was Edward. He was called Edward the Sixth, because there had been five kings of England before him who had the same name ; and at some other time, when we are talking about the history of England, I will tell you more about him. But now I am to tell you the story of this young king and the Bible.

"He was but ten years old when he became the king, and he died in his sixteenth year ; and he always, from the time he was old enough to understand any thing about religion, was a very serious and pious boy : so you see, my dear boys, that young persons can be religious as well as those who are older. This young king had, besides, an excellent understanding, and he studied much, and learned many languages ; and his temper was

so sweet that he never would allow any one to be killed because he belonged to a religious society different from his own, though some other kings and queens had done it before him.

"He was one day in the room where he usually met the gentlemen who advised him about the governing of his kingdom, and they wanted to look at some papers which were put away upon a shelf, too high for any of them to reach without standing on something. One of the persons in the room rose to get the papers, and finding them above his reach, looked around, and took up a large book which was lying on the table, and placing it on the floor, stood on it. The king saw him, and immediately going up to him, removed him gently from the book, which he raised from the floor, and after brushing it, he kissed it with great reverence, and laid it on the table. It was a Bible; and he told the gentleman that he could not sit still, and see God's Word made a footstool."

"Uncle Philip, what did he kiss the book for?"

"Merely to show the person how much he valued and reverenced the Word of God."

"Well, he was a good king, Uncle Philip."

"He was a good Christian, I believe, and

was not ashamed to own before men much older than himself that he honoured and served God: and that, boys, does him more credit, in my opinion, than his having been a king does. But, now that you have heard the story, I will bid you good day. Bring your sisters when you come again."

" We will. Good morning, Uncle Philip."

CONVERSATION II.

Uncle Philip tells the Children how to find out what was done a great many years ago; and reads to them out of a book, what a man named Barnabas wrote.

" Ah, my dear boys; so you have come again, I see, and brought your sisters with you. Walk in, walk in, my children, we will go into the library, and shall find it ready for us, I dare say; and a delightful place it is, I think."

" Yes, Uncle Philip, it is a very pleasant place. How very cool, with these long windows reaching to the floor; and how beautiful

that honeysuckle is, winding around the pillars of the piazza ; and look, look, Uncle Philip ! there is a lovely little humming-bird at one of the flowers."

" I see him, boys ; I often sit here alone, and have many such little visitors in the course of a morning ; but do you hear nothing ?"

" Oh yes, sir ; I hear, at the bottom of the lawn, the little river dashing over the stones, and making quite a noise."

" True, it is the river ; and to my ear it makes very pleasant music. I love to sit on the bench yonder, under the shade of that fine old elm, and listen to its noisy babbling. I have had some very agreeable and, I hope, profitable thoughts under that old tree. But now let us begin."

" Directly, Uncle Philip, if you please ; but first I wish to ask you one question."

" Well, what is it ?"

" Did you ever read all these books in the library ?"

" No, no, my dear children, not *all* of them. Many of them I have read throughout ; some of them, too, more than once ; of most of them I have probably read a part, and these last are what are called books of reference."

"Uncle Philip, I never heard of that name before. What does it mean?"

"I will tell you. A book of reference is a book to turn to, and find information upon some particular point which you have forgotten, or never knew. Suppose I were reading in a book of travels, and the traveller should write about some bird, or insect, or flower which he found, and which I never saw, but should not tell *all* about it. Now I wish to know more, yonder are some books about birds and nothing else, next to them are several more about insects, and yonder stand more, all about flowers: now I just take his description, and by the help of those books I find out all I wish to know. This would be using my books as books of reference. Suppose, again, I were reading a book about history, and the writer should say that some great man did a particular thing. I think, perhaps, that he is mistaken, and that some one else did that thing; yonder are a great many volumes, containing the lives of almost all the great men who ever lived; I turn to the life of the man whom the historian named, and by reading it I find out that the man was dead three or four years before the thing was

done. Then, my book of lives was a book of reference. Do you understand it now?"

"Yes, Uncle Philip, and we are much obliged to you."

"You are quite welcome, my children, and you will have an opportunity of understanding still better before we have done, as we shall probably *refer* to several of the books which you see here. And now we are ready to commence.

"William Palmer, will you hand that Bible to your sister? And now, Mary, tell me how many books there are in the New Testament."

"I will count them, Uncle Philip. There are twenty-seven."

"Very true. These books, my children, were written at different times, in different places, by eight different people, and under different circumstances. They are all about the Christian religion, and for a long time, it has been the custom to bind them up together in *one* book; though they are really distinct from each other, as I have told you. In these twenty-seven books, we find the history of a being who was called JESUS CHRIST: we also read about the kind of religion which he taught,

and how it first spread to different parts of the world. We read, too, what it was that this JESUS CHRIST told the people to *believe*, and we read that he also told them what to *do*. Some of these twenty-seven books are called *epistles*."

"Uncle Philip, what is an epistle?"

"Oh, I know. An epistle is a letter; is it not, Uncle Philip?"

"Yes. And these letters were written, as we read in the letters themselves, some to whole churches, that is, to a great many people; and some were written to a single person. And now, children, there are two things we wish to know: in the first place, did the people whose names are put to these twenty-seven books as the authors of them, really write them? and, in the second place, if they did write them, have they told the truth in them?"

"Why, Uncle Philip, how long ago is it since these books and letters were written?"

"About eighteen hundred years."

"Why how, then, can we ever find out the truth about things which happened so many years since?"

"Softly, softly, my lad. Have a little pa

tience ; there are usually more ways than one of finding out things that happened many years ago."

" Uncle Philip, I believe what you say ; but it seems curious to me. If the people whose names are put to these books and letters in the New Testament were *alive now*, we might ask them, or some of their acquaintance, and they could tell something about it. But all these people have been dead a long time, there is no such thing as asking *them*."

" Very good, as far as you have gone, but now let us look a little farther. If you could see any of the people who were living eighteen hundred years ago, you would ask them, I suppose, if they ever heard of any being named JESUS CHRIST, and if they knew of men named *Matthew*, and *Mark*, and *Luke*, and *John*, who wrote about this CHRIST ?"

" Certainly I would, Uncle Philip : and if they said, Yes ; then I would ask them to tell me *what* these men wrote, and I would compare it with what I have here in the New Testament ; and if both agreed, then I should know that these books which I have are correct."

" Very sensible, all that you have said ; and

I am glad to find that you know how to think so clearly. All you wish for, then, is to see some of the people who were living about eighteen hundred years ago, that you might have a little conversation with them?"

"Yes, Uncle Philip."

"Now, suppose you could find out what they have to say on this subject, without seeing them, would that answer?"

"Certainly it would, Uncle Philip, very well."

"Ah! I see, I see how it is—Uncle Philip means that these men who were living so long since have *written* about the books in our New Testament, and we have got what they wrote: so it is the same thing to *read* what they wrote, as it would be to *talk* with them."

"Precisely the same thing, my dear children. If persons who lived so long ago, in their writings speak of JESUS CHRIST, and of Matthew, and the rest of the New Testament writers, and if they repeat in their writings the very words which we have in the New Testament, and tell us that they got them there, it will show that their New Testament was just like ours, will it not?"

"We should suppose it would, Uncle Philip."

"It certainly would, children. And then it is the same thing as if we had lived when they did, and talked with them. Let me show you more plainly still. You remember, that when you were here last I told you a story about King Edward the Sixth, and the Bible. Now I never saw King Edward, and never talked with anybody who saw him take up the Bible from the floor and kiss it; then how did I know any thing about it?—for it happened some hundreds of years ago, before I was born. I will tell you. In the first place, I know there was such a person as King Edward, because every history of his country (and there are several different ones) speaks of him; I have seen, too, printed copies of some of the laws which were made while he was king, and in a great many books written at that time and since I find his name mentioned; and nobody ever denied that there was such a person. These, I think, are very good reasons for believing that there was such a king as Edward. As to the story of his kissing the Bible, I have read it in three or four different books, and never saw it contra-

dicted anywhere, and therefore it is probably true, especially as all writers say Edward was a very pious young man. Do you understand now how we may find out things that happened a long time since?"

"Oh yes; it is quite plain now, Uncle Philip, and we thank you very much."

"Now then, we are ready to go on: and here, my children, I have to tell you, that if we commence at the very beginning of Christianity, eighteen hundred years ago, we shall find a long list of writers up to this very day. Some of them were friends, and some of them were enemies, to CHRIST; and from what they wrote, I hope to show you that from the very beginning Christians had the same books which we now have in our New Testament; that they were always believed to have been written by the same persons whom we think wrote them; that what is written in them was always believed to be true; and that religious people always read them to find out their duty, just as we do. So, just hand me that large book—and, Mary, you will find the places in the Bible which I name to you, and read them aloud."

"Uncle Philip, I wish to say something, if you please."

"Say on, then."

"Those are very crooked letters in that large book which you have opened. What are they, for I cannot read them?"

"They are Greek letters, children. The New Testament was written at first in Greek (though some learned men think that the Gospel of St. Matthew was first written in Hebrew, and afterward was translated into Greek), and a great many other early writings were in Greek: but I am going to read some of these early writings to you in English, so that you can compare them with what is written in our English Testament. I want to show you that these early writers had the same books which we have, for they have often copied out of them the very same words. Now, Mary, turn to *Acts xiii. 2*, and read."

Mary reads, '*As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.*'

"Now read in the 46th verse of the same chapter."

Mary.—‘*Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold.*’

“And now turn to 1 *Corinthians* ix. 6, and read again.”

Mary.—‘*Or I only and Barnabas, have we not power to forbear working?*’

“Here you see, my children, a person named *Barnabas* is mentioned in three places, and he seems to have kept company with one of the persons whose name is put to some of the Epistles in the New Testament.”

“I know who that was, Uncle Philip.”

“Who was it?”

“It was St. Paul.”

“Yes, you are right: and now, if we can find any thing that this Barnabas wrote, would you not like to hear it?”

“Oh yes; for that would be like talking with Barnabas himself, you know.”

“Very well, then; here is a letter in Greek, which was written, as very learned men say, by this Barnabas. It is in two parts; the first is filled with persuasions to those who were Christians to remain so, and to live like Christians; and the second part gives them instructions how to live as good men.”

"But, Uncle Philip, there is one thing I have just thought of: perhaps this very letter of Barnabas has been altered since it was written."

"There is good sense in that remark, my children. Before we can trust to this letter, we must find out that it has not been altered; and I was just going to tell you (when I was interrupted) that in many early writings I often find this very letter of Barnabas spoken of, and many parts of it are quoted; and these parts always agree exactly, and are in the very same words, with my copy here in this book: so that I think my copy must be a true one."

"Certainly it is, Uncle Philip, if it is like all the old ones which those early writers copied from."

"Very well. Now I will read from this letter, and Mary shall read from the New Testament; and we will see how they agree.—So, now for

THE TESTIMONY OF BARNABAS.

Here is a place in which he says, 'Let us, therefore, beware, lest it should happen to us, as it is written, "*there are many called, few*

chosen.” Now, Mary, turn to the twentieth chapter of Matthew, and 16th verse, and see if you can find any such words.”

“ Yes, Uncle Philip ; here it is—‘ *For many be called, but few chosen.*’ ”

“ Now turn to the twenty-second chapter and 14th verse.”

“ Here it is again, Uncle Philip : ‘ *For many are called, but few are chosen.*’ ”

“ Now, my children, do you think that Barnabas had ever seen these two chapters of Matthew ?”

“ Why, it seems so, Uncle Philip. Tell us what you think, will you ?”

“ I think that he had seen them, and learned the words from them ; and I will tell you why I think so. He says, before quoting the words, ‘ *as it is written,*’—now I think he mentions that it was written, because he had *read* it ; and besides that, my dear children, he shows us another thing. It is this : whenever the Jews cited or quoted any words out of the Old Testament (which was all the Bible they had before Christ came), they always used the words ‘ *it is written.*’ Now Barnabas was a Jew ; and when he used the words, ‘ *as it is written,*’ he meant to show that he considered the book

of Matthew to be just as holy and sacred as the Old Testament ; that is, it was part of his Bible. Do you understand me ?"

" Very well, Uncle Philip ; whenever a Jew took any thing out of his Bible, and put '*as it is written*,' before it, he meant to show that he was not copying out of any common book, but out of one which God had given, and which therefore was holy."

" Yes ; and now let us go on. Here is another place in this letter of Barnabas, in which he says, '*Give to every man that asketh of thee.*' Mary, suppose you turn to the sixth chapter of Luke, and 30th verse, and read it."

" I have found it, Uncle Philip. It says, '*Give to every man that asketh of thee.*' "

" Look now in Matthew, chapter fifth and verse 42, and you will find it again."

" So it is, Uncle Philip."

" Barnabas says here, too, my children, that these were the words of Christ. Mary will tell us now whose words Matthew and Luke say they were."

" It is CHRIST who is speaking here, too, Uncle Philip. In the sixth of Luke, he begins to speak at the 20th verse ; and in the fifth of Matthew he begins at the 3d verse."

“Well, here is another place in this letter of Barnabas : he is speaking of Christ, and he says ‘that he might show, that *he came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.*’ Look at the ninth of Matthew, and 13th verse.”

“I have found it, Uncle Philip : ‘*For I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.*’”

“Yes ; and in Mark ii. 17, and in Luke v. 32, you will find the same thing. So that Barnabas has used in his letter sentences which we find in the gospels of Matthew, and Mark, and Luke. He has here, too, some from St. Paul’s epistles, and one from St. Peter’s ; but what we have read already will do at present. I wish not to fatigue you ; and now tell me, my dear children, do you think that Barnabas knew any thing of what is written in our New Testament ?”

“Why, Uncle Philip, we know that he did, some how or other, write the same things that are written in our New Testament ; and we should suppose that he must have read them.”

“I think it is very probable ; but, my children, even suppose that he never had read them ; then we must believe that what was

written in these books must have been very commonly known to the people generally, when Barnabas, without even reading the books, could find out so well what was in them. But I think that he had seen the books for himself; and as far as he has told us what was in his copies, we find it agrees with ours, you see. And this will do for Barnabas. When you come again, we will look at the writings of some other early author. Good-by."

"Farewell, Uncle Philip."

CONVERSATION III.

Uncle Philip tells a story about the death of a good man named Clement, and reads to the Children something which he wrote.

"WELL, Uncle Philip, we have done with Barnabas; you said; who comes next?"

"The next writer, my dear children, was named Clement; and he is called Clement of Rome, because there was another Clement

who lived in the city of Alexandria. Perhaps you would like to hear something about the life of this good man, before we look at his writings."

"Oh yes, Uncle Philip, by all means, let us hear it, if you please."

"Sit down then, and I will tell you some things about him. Mary, look for the fourth chapter of St. Paul's epistle to the Philippians, and 3d verse, and read it for us."

"It says, Uncle Philip, at the end of the verse, '*with Clement also, and with other my fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life.*'"

"This Clement, of whom Paul in his letter here speaks, is the same person whose life I am to talk about, so you see that he knew the Apostle Paul himself: and I remember, too, reading in the writings of a very good man, named Irenæus (who was born about the year 125), something which he says about this Clement."

"What does this Irenæus say, Uncle Philip?"

"He says that Clement 'had seen the blessed apostles, and talked with them, and had their preaching still sounding in his ears.'

"Then, Uncle Philip, Clement must have had a good opportunity to know what the apostles said and wrote.

"I think so too : and now let us go on with his life. It is difficult to say exactly in what year Clement was born, but it was not long after Christ lived, and it was while the apostles were alive, because he talked with them, you know. It is supposed that Clement was born at the city of Rome, in Italy ; but it is not a certain thing. When he first grew up, he was not a Christian ; but while he was a young man, he wished to know something about his soul, and what would become of it after he was dead ; but he could not find out any thing which satisfied him. At last, he heard from somebody that the Son of God had lately been in this world, and taught the people excellent things about the soul ; Barnabas (the very same man whom we talked about) happened to be in Rome at that time ; and Clement went to him, and he first learned the Christian religion from Barnabas. Afterward he met with St. Peter, who instructed him still more, and he was then baptized as a Christian. It was not long before he became a preacher, and several old writers say that

St. Peter appointed him to be the chief minister, or bishop, over the churches in Rome, and he was the bishop for a great many years."

"It so happened, that while he was the bishop, about the year 95, he wrote a letter to the church at Corinth, a city in Greece. There were disputes and quarrels in that church, and Clement wrote his letter to make peace among them."

"But, Uncle Philip, was it not very wrong, to have quarrelling in the church?"

"Yes, my dear children, it was wrong, indeed, to have strife among Christians; but remember, their being Christians did not make them quarrel; for if they had obeyed the rules of the Christian religion, they would have lived in peace. We must not find fault unjustly with Christianity, and blame *it* when men do wrong who are Christians: for it is not Christianity which makes them do wrong, but their want of it."

"Uncle Philip, did you ever see the letter which Clement wrote to that quarrelsome church?"

"I never saw the letter itself, but I have a copy of it in this large book, and we will read some parts of it presently."

"But tell us first, if you please, what became of Clement?"

"I will. Some of the first Christians, children, suffered very much. Sometimes they were put to death very cruelly, because they would be Christians, and worship the true God; and before we finish our conversations, I will tell you some very sad stories of the persecutions, and pain, and death of these poor creatures. They were called martyrs."

"What does martyr mean, Uncle Philip?"

"A martyr means one who is a witness; and the first Christians who were killed on account of their religion were called so, because by their deaths they *proved* how much they believed, and loved, and valued the religion which Christ had taught."

"Was Clement a martyr, Uncle Philip?"

"He was. The Roman emperor, whose name was Trajan, sent him away from Rome, and ordered that he should be put to hard work in some mines. You know what a mine is, I suppose?"

"Oh yes, sir, a mine is a place under ground, and sometimes a great distance under ground, where men dig up coal, and ore of metals, to be melted."

"Very good. The poor creatures who were sent to these mines were treated very cruelly : they were put in irons, and whipped severely, and made to be slaves. Sometimes their treatment was worse still ; their heads were half-shaved, their foreheads branded with a hot iron, the right eye was bored out, and the left leg was broken."

"Oh, how cruel!"

"Ah, cruel indeed, my children. Well, it was to this place that Clement was sent, and when he arrived, he found a large number of Christians who had been sent there at different times before him. They were sorry enough to see so good a man sent there, but he soon made them feel happier, for he began at once to preach to them about Christ, and comforted them ; and many who were not Christians, when they heard him preach, became so ; and the old man, for he was now far advanced in years, found that God could make him useful even in the mines. At last the Roman emperor heard of what he was doing, and ordered some of the Christians to be put to death, to stop others from becoming so ; but it did not stop them, and therefore he thought it was best to kill the leader of them, and so Clement was

thrown into the sea, with a heavy weight tied to his body ; and this happened about the year 100. But I ought to tell you that some very learned men have thought that, perhaps, it was not this Clement who suffered all this ; there was another Christian of the same name who we know was put to death by the emperor, and this may have caused a mistake to be made. However, it is not of much consequence to us, at this time, how he died ; all that we wish to know now is what he wrote in this letter of his. And now, if you would like to know more about our Clement, I think that you will have an opportunity soon. The first number of the 'Boy's and Girl's Library,' is called 'Lives of the Apostles and Martyrs.' I must ask my nephews to print the second volume of that book, for it will probably contain the life of this good man."

THE TESTIMONY OF CLEMENT.

" He says, ' Take into your hands the Epistle of the blessed Paul the Apostle. What did he at the first write to you in the beginning of the gospel ? Verily he did by the Spirit admonish you concerning himself and Cephas and Apollos, because that even then you did form parties.' Now, Mary, do you read in

the first Epistle to the Corinthians, the first chapter and 12th verse ; what does it say ?”

“ It says, Uncle Philip, ‘ *Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ.*’ ”

“ Well, my children, before we go on, let us talk about this for a few moments. Do you suppose that Clement had ever seen a letter written by St. Paul ?”

“ Why, surely, Uncle Philip, he had ; for he tells them to take it into their hands, and he tells them too what Paul had said in it.”

“ Very good : to whom did Paul write his letter ?”

“ To the Corinthians, Uncle Philip.”

“ And to whom did Clement write his ?”

“ To the Corinthians, also, you said, because they had quarrels in their church.”

“ Yes. They both wrote to the same people then, you see.”

“ Yes, sir.”

“ Now, my children, if these Corinthians had never had any letter at all from Paul, do you think that Clement would have told them to take it into their hands and read it ?”

“ Why, if he had, Uncle Philip, they would have thought it very strange.”

"Would he not, my children, have told a falsehood, if he had said to them that they had such a letter, when they had not?"

"Yes, sir."

"And would not these Corinthians have known that it was a falsehood?"

"Yes, sir."

"And would they have had any respect for Clement, or for his letter, when they found a falsehood in it?"

"No, sir."

"One question more. Do you think Clement had sense enough to know all this?"

"Certainly, Uncle Philip; if he was not a fool, he could not help knowing it."

"Well, my children, I agree with you; and therefore I think Clement told the truth about that letter. Now what does he say about it? Why he tells us, 1st, there was a letter; 2d, that Paul wrote it; 3d, that it was written to the Corinthians, and that they had it; and 4th, that it had in it something about Paul and Cephas and Apollos. And here Mary has read, in a letter from Paul to the Corinthians, printed in our New Testament, a sentence about the very same things, Paul and Cephas and Apollos. It is my opinion that this letter

from which Mary read is precisely the very letter that Clement meant."

"Yes, Uncle Philip, and we think so too; for Clement would not have been so foolish as to write to the very people who had a letter from somebody else, and tell them that it had certain things in it, unless he knew that it had those things. They would have laughed at him as a foolish man."

"Then I think, my children, that Clement's copy of this Epistle to the Corinthians was just like ours; and, you see, he tells us who wrote it. He says it was Paul. That is one thing we wished to know. Now there is another little thing to say about this letter, and then we will go on. Clement says, in the part which I read to you, that Paul '*did by the Spirit*' write to the Corinthians."

"Uncle Philip, what does that mean?"

"I am going to tell you. What Clement means is that God put into the mind of St. Paul what he should write in this letter to the Corinthians; and it shows that Clement thought that God had taught Paul what to say: and he tells the Corinthians so; and therefore it is very likely that the Corinthians believed the same thing."

"Yes, Uncle Philip ; and if God did show Paul what to say, then it was God's word, and Paul only wrote it for Him, and so the Corinthians would pay attention to it, and obey it."

"Exactly so : this was what Clement intended they should do, when he said that Paul wrote 'by the Spirit.' Now let us proceed.

"Here is another place : listen to what I read,—'For thus saith the Holy Spirit, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom—especially remembering the words of the Lord Jesus which he spake, teaching gentleness and long-suffering. For thus he said, Be ye merciful, that ye may obtain mercy ; forgive, that it may be forgiven unto you. As you do, so shall it be done unto you : as you give, so shall it be given unto you : as ye judge, so shall ye be judged : as ye show kindness, so shall kindness be shown unto you : with what measure ye mete, with the same shall it be measured to you.' Now, Mary, turn to the sixth chapter of St. Luke, and 36th verse."

"I have found it, Uncle Philip : '*Be ye therefore merciful as your Father also is merciful.*'"

"Very good ; read on, the 37th and 38th verses."

“‘*Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: give, and it shall be given unto you.*’”

“Read now the last part of that verse.”

‘*For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.*’

“Thank you, Mary; that will do for this part of Clement’s letter; and, my children, if you will look at St. Matthew, chapter vii. verses 1 and 2, you will find nearly the same words. But let us take another place, for this letter of Clement’s is really full of them: only take notice, before we pass on, that Clement, and Luke, and Matthew all say that these words which Mary has been reading to us are Christ’s.

“Clement says here, in another place, ‘Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, for He said, Wo to that man by whom offences come. It were better for him that he had not been born than that he should offend one of my elect. It were better for him that a millstone should be tied about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the sea, than that he should offend one of my little ones.’”

“Oh, Uncle Philip! I remember something

just like that in the Bible ; it was in my Sunday-school lesson last Sunday, in the seventeenth chapter of St. Luke, at the beginning.

“ Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come ; but wo unto him through whom they come ! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.”

“ Well done, my little fellow ! I am really glad to find that you remember so well what you are taught in the Sunday-school. You have repeated it correctly ; and if you will look in Matthew xviii. 6, and in Mark ix. 42, you may read almost the same words. But this will do for the present, as I am anxious not to weary you.”

“ Uncle Philip, before we stop, I wish to ask you something, if you have time to hear me.”

“ Go on. I will hear you with pleasure.”

“ Is that letter of Clement’s very long ?”

“ No.”

“ I asked you, because I am going to study Greek when I am older, and I thought that perhaps I might learn to read it for myself.”

“ Well, I like that thought ; and when you are ready, I shall be very happy to lend you

the book, and to help you in any difficulty. But, short as this letter is, I must tell you that there are more than forty places in it (for I have taken the trouble to count them) in which sentiments in our New Testament are either copied exactly or referred to by Clement ; and they are in various parts of the New Testament, too. I think that Clement had seen the Gospels by Matthew, and Mark, and Luke, the Acts of the Apostles, St. Paul's Epistles to the Romans, the Corinthians, the Galatians, the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians, the first Epistle to the Thessalonians, both the Epistles to Timothy, that to Titus, and to the Hebrews. He had also seen, I think, the Epistle of James, and both the Epistles of Peter."

" Why, Uncle Philip, this is almost all of the New Testament. Why do you think that he had seen all these ?"

" Because, my children, I find in his letter places in which he has either copied from them exactly, or come so very near it that I think he must have known what was written in them : sometimes a word may not be exactly the same, but he always has the meaning. And there is one thing more which we ought to notice."

“What is it, Uncle Philip?”

“I told you, you will remember, that this Clement was the Bishop of Rome, and he wrote this letter to the Corinthians while he was the chief minister in that city. Now all the other ministers and Christians there knew what parts of the New Testament they had and believed; and therefore Clement could not have put into his letter as a part of the Christians' books what all those who were living around him did not believe: so that Clement's letter shows that not he only, but that all the Christians at Rome believed these books.”

CONVERSATION IV.

Uncle Philip tells the Children a long story about lions killing a good man named Ignatius, and then reads for them some of this good man's letters.

"WELL, children, are you all here, and ready to go on?"

"Oh yes, Uncle Philip, all ready, and willing too, and we understand very well what you are doing."

"What is it?"

"You are showing us, in the writings of these old men, sentences which prove that they must have had a New Testament just like ours; because they often use the very same words that are in our book; and they sometimes tell us, too, that they got them out of letters written by Paul, or Peter, or some one else whose names are put to some of the writings of the New Testament."

"Very good. But you must remember that I read to you but a very small part of what these old men have copied from our New Testament; just enough to show you that they had it. If I should read all the places, it would take a very long time, and you would become tired. But let us go on, I shall have some stories to tell you of some of these men presently."

"Well, who comes next, Uncle Philip? Mary has her Bible ready."

"The next that I shall read to you is,

THE TESTIMONY OF IGNATIUS.

"But I suppose that you would like to know something about him, before I read to you what he has written?"

"Oh yes, by all means, Uncle Philip."

"Listen then. He was born about the year of our Lord 28, but I cannot tell you certainly the place of his birth. There is also a story about him, which may be true, but is somewhat doubtful. I would not say positively that it is true, but I will tell you what it is. It is said that he was the very child whom Christ placed before his disciples when he said to them, 'Except ye be converted, and become

as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' But whether he was the same child or not is of no consequence : one thing I believe is very certain ; that when he was quite young, he was acquainted with some of the apostles."

" Why do you think so, Uncle Philip ?"

" I will tell you ; a very good man, named Chrysostom, says, in a book which he wrote, that Ignatius was educated by the apostles, was always with them, and talked with them constantly. As far as I can find out from my old books here, he was taught when he was young, many things by St. John.

" From his youth, Ignatius was religious, and when he became a man, was a preacher in the city of Antioch. Can any of you recollect any remarkable thing mentioned in the Bible about Antioch ?"

" I can, Uncle Philip. It was there that the disciples were first called Christians."

" Right. In the year of our Lord 70, and when Ignatius was a little more than forty years old, he was made the bishop of Antioch ; and I think that in all things he was a man truly like to the apostles.

" It so happened that in the year 107, Tra-

jan, the emperor of Rome, who had Clement put to death, as I told you, visited Antioch, and began directly to inquire after the Christians there."

"What did he want with them, Uncle Philip? was he a Christian?"

"No, no, my children; he was very far from being so. Some who have written about him say he was a very mild and kind emperor; but I do not agree with them, for one thing is very certain, that for many years he cruelly persecuted the Christians. He always inquired about them when he came to a place, because he wished, if they were doing well, to persecute them. He was so silly as to think, that if the Christians flourished, it injured his power. As soon as Ignatius heard that Trajan had been inquiring about the Christians, he went at once, without being sent for, and told the emperor that he was one of them. He was then an old man, about seventy-six years of age; but Trajan was not moved at all by his venerable appearance. He tried to make Ignatius give up his Christianity, but the good old man would not; and then the emperor, being very angry, ordered that he should be bound and carried by sol-

diers to Rome, and should there, in the sight of the people, be thrown to wild beasts, to be destroyed by them."

"And was it done, Uncle Philip?"

"Yes, my children; but listen, and I will tell you all about it. He was put under a guard of ten soldiers, and they started with him for Rome. On the way they stopped at a place named Smyrna, and there Ignatius met an old friend. I told you (you will remember) that Ignatius was taught much in his youth by St. John. Well, there was another youth like himself, who also used to be taught with him by the apostle: his name was Polycarp. He, too, when he became a man, was a preacher; and when Ignatius reached Smyrna, Polycarp was the bishop in that city. No doubt these two good men were very glad to see each other once more. Polycarp encouraged Ignatius, and earnestly begged him never to give up Christianity, but to die first. There was no danger of his giving it up. While Ignatius was at Smyrna, all the ministers in the neighbourhood came to see him and pray with him: he (though he knew that he was going to Rome to be killed) was thinking not of himself, but how he should be

doing good while he lived. So he wrote in Smyrna four letters to four different churches, and it is from these letters and some others that I shall presently read to you.

"After remaining some time at Smyrna, he went on to a place named Troas, where he wrote three more letters, one to his friend Polycarp, one to the church at Smyrna, and one to the church at a city named Philadelphia. He wrote, in all, seven letters on this journey, and we will see presently what he says in them; but now let us go on with his history. When he came near Rome, crowds of the Christians came out to meet him: for they had all heard something of this holy man, and wished to see him. From the time of his arrival to that of his death, the Christians visited him every day, and joined with him in his prayers, which he was making to God all the time. At last the day came for him to be given to the wild beasts, and they carried him to the amphitheatre as it was called."

"Uncle Philip, what is an amphitheatre?"

"It is a large round building, open at the top commonly, and with seats in it, beginning low down, and then rising like steps, one above the other, until they reach nearly the

top of the building. It was built in this manner so that the people when they were sitting in it could look over the heads of those on the seats before them, and all could see what was done in the open space at the bottom."

"What did the Romans have such buildings for, Uncle Philip?"

"To have their public shows in. The ancient Romans, my children, were a people highly civilized, and they knew very many useful things : but they did not know '*the true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent.*' They show us, I think, how far a nation may go in being civilized, and becoming great and learned without Christianity. In this very amphitheatre of which I have been talking, it was common for men, called gladiators, to fight each other with swords until one or both were killed ; while the people looked on, and thought it was a very pleasant amusement."

"Why, Uncle Philip ! did they call this good sense ! All the sensible *boys* in our country, to say nothing about the *men*, would know that it was very foolish as well as wicked for men to kill each other in sport.

These Romans had strange amusements, Uncle Philip."

"So I think, children: and their history shows us that, after all, Christianity is a great blessing for any nation; a nation without it may in some things be very great, but (every thing else being the same) it will always be happier and greater with it. But let us go on with our story: Ignatius was carried to the amphitheatre, and it was crowded with people, who were abusing him and his God, and anxious to see the wild beasts tear him in pieces. The old man was put in the open space at the bottom of the amphitheatre, and looked around as calmly as if nothing was to be done to him. In a few moments they brought in some lions, which had been starved to make them more fierce, and let them loose. At first the beasts did not see Ignatius, but, walking around, looked on the people, and filled the place with their roarings."

"Uncle Philip, what did Ignatius do? did he not try to get out?"

"No; and if he had tried, he would not have succeeded. He stood perfectly still, looking on the lions; and all he said was, 'I shall now, as God's corn, be ground be-

tween the teeth of these wild beasts, and become white bread for my heavenly Master.' Just then the lions saw him, and rushed towards him with open jaws, while the people raised a shout of joy ; but their cruel pleasure was very short, for in a moment he was dead. Nothing was left of him but a few bones, and some of the Christians who had gone to see him die, that they might be witnesses of his firmness, gathered these few bones together, and they were taken to Antioch and buried by the Christians there, near the city. And now shall we go on, and see what this good man wrote ?"

" If you please, Uncle Philip."

" I told you then, you will remember, that he wrote seven letters ; there are two copies of these letters, called the larger and the less, because one contains more than the other."

" Uncle Philip, how did that happen ?"

" I will tell you. Some persons, after Ignatius was dead, wished to make the world believe that his opinions were the same with some which they held ; and to prove this, they took these letters and added to them something of their own, which Ignatius never wrote. These are called the larger letters,

and I shall not read any thing from them, because other people have added to them. I will read entirely from the less."

"Before you begin, Uncle Philip, I just wish to ask you why you think Ignatius wrote these letters which you call the less? I am sure you have a reason for it."

"I have, my children, and it is this; a great many old writers whom I have examined say that Ignatius did write them. Polycarp, whom he met at Smyrna, says so; and a man named Ireneus, who lived about the same time, says so; and a man named Eusebius, who wrote a history of the church in the beginning, and a person named Jerome, and another who was called Origen, and a number of others, all say that Ignatius wrote these letters. Will that proof do?"

"Oh yes, Uncle Philip, that is enough. Now let us hear how much this good old man knew about the New Testament which we now have."

"In the first place, then, you know that in our New Testament there is an epistle from St. Paul to the Ephesians; now I think Ignatius had read that epistle; for one of his own letters is to that same Ephesian church,

and this is what he says in it about Paul's epistle :—‘Ye are the companions of Paul the sanctified, the martyr ; deservedly most happy: who throughout all his epistle makes mention of you in Christ Jesus.’ Now if any one will read with care the epistle of Paul to the Ephesians, he will find that the apostle commends them in it very highly, and never once reproves them. Let us now turn to the Bible. Mary, read in Matthew x. the end of verse 16.”

“It says, Uncle Philip, ‘*be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves.*’”

“Uncle Philip, have you that in your book ?”

“I have. In the letter which Ignatius wrote to Polycarp, he says, ‘be wise as a serpent in all things, and harmless as a dove.’ See now what is written in Matthew xii. 33.”

“Here it is; ‘*for the tree is known by its fruit.*’”

“Very good. In his letter to the Ephesians he says, ‘the tree is shown by its fruit.’ But let us go on. Mary, turn to Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, chapter first, and read the 18th verse.”

“*For the preaching of the cross is to them*

that perish foolishness ; but unto us that are saved it is the power of God.

"Now read the 20th verse."

"*Where is the wise ? Where is the scribe ? Where is the disputer of this world ?*"

"Now let me read ; for in this letter of Ignatius to the Ephesians, there is something very much like all that ; here it is,—'For the doctrine of the cross is a stumbling-block to unbelievers ; but unto us, salvation and life eternal. *Where is the wise ? Where is the disputer ? Where is the boasting of them that are called prudent ?*'"

"Ah, Uncle Philip, you may depend upon it, Ignatius had seen what Paul wrote to the Corinthians."

"Why do you think so ?"

"Because what he wrote is so much like what St. Paul wrote : why the meaning is the very same, and sometimes even the words are exactly alike. *Do you think Ignatius had seen Paul's epistle ?*"

"Certainly I do, and think it a reasonable⁴ opinion, too. But I will give you another proof that Ignatius imitated what he had read in Paul's writings to the Corinthians. If Mary will read in that same epistle, chapter

xv. verse 8, I will show you what I mean.
What does it say, Mary?"

"*And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.*"

"Now hear what Ignatius says in his epistle to the Romans : 'For I am not worthy, being the last of them, and one born out of due time.'"

"Go on, Uncle Philip, let us hear some more from this good old martyr."

"Well, in his letter to Polycarp, here is something :—' In like manner exhort my brethren, in the name of Jesus Christ, to love their wives, as the Lord the church.' Now let Mary read in Ephesians v. 25."

"*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church.*"

"Well, here again in his letter to the church at Philadelphia, I read—' I beseech you that ye do nothing through strife.' Now read in Philippians ii. 3.

"*Let nothing be done through strife.*"

"Very good. Now in his letter to Polycarp, I read, 'pray without ceasing,' and here it is again in his letter to the Ephesians, 'pray without ceasing.' Now see what is written in 1 *Thessalonians* v. 17."

"The very same words, Uncle Philip, '*pray without ceasing.*'"

"Well, my children, let us try once more. In his letter to the Ephesians, I find these words :—' For it is written, God resisteth the proud.' What did I tell you about the use of the words, *it is written*?"

"I remember, Uncle Philip. You said that it was the way in which the Jews always wrote when they meant to use words out of a book which they thought was holy, and came from God."

"Very well. I am glad to find you so attentive ; now then, what does Ignatius mean by using them here ?"

"Why *he* must have had some holy books, Uncle Philip, and these words were written in them, I suppose."

"You suppose very rightly. Now, Mary, let us hear from you. Look first at the epistle of James iv. 6, and then at the first epistle of Peter v. 5."

"In both places, Uncle Philip, I find the same words : '*God resisteth the proud.*'"

"Then you see, my children, two things. First, Ignatius had seen these two epistles by James and Peter : and next, that he looked upon them as *holy* writings, because he says, of things contained in them, *it is written*. But I am afraid that you are weary ; if you

are I will stop, though I had one or two things more to say about Ignatius."

"Oh go on, go on, Uncle Philip; we will listen attentively."

"Then I will talk a little longer. In the first place, I wished to say that there are a great many more places than I have read to you, in which Ignatius copies from a Bible just like ours. And in the next place, I believe that even when he was alive, these holy books, or at any rate most of them, were collected together, and went under one common name. I suppose it was not called the New Testament then, but still most of these books were then got together by the Christians into one."

"Why I think, Uncle Phillip, that is very probable. The man who printed one would go on and print all the rest."

"Print! why, my child, there was no such thing as printing then."

"Then how did they make books, Uncle Philip?"

"Copied them with a pen; and it shows you how much the first Christians loved these books, and how highly they valued them, when they took such pains to make copies of them. But let me show you why I think the books were collected together even as far back

as when Ignatius was alive. Here is a sentence in his letter to the Philadelphians :—he says, ‘Fleeing to the *gospel*, as the flesh of Jesus, and to the *apostles*, as the presbytery of the church. Let us also love the *prophets*, because that they also spoke of the gospel, and hoped in Christ, and expected him.’ Now how many different things does Ignatius here mention?”

“Three, Uncle Philip. 1, Fleeing to the *gospel*; 2, and to the *apostles*; 3, loving the *prophets*: but I do not know exactly what he means.”

“I suppose not, and therefore I will tell you what learned men* have thought about it; and I cannot help thinking they are right, because what they say is reasonable. What Ignatius means is this:—that to find out the will of God, he went to the *gospels*, which he believed just as much as if Christ himself, in the flesh, as a man, had spoken to him what was written in them: he went also to the *apostles*, that is, to the writings contained in their epistles or letters: and by the *prophets*, he means the *writings* of the prophets in the Old Testament, for as they were all dead, he could not love them in any other way but in

* Grabe, Mill, Le Clerc.

their writings. Besides this he often mentions a collection of sacred writings under the name of ‘the gospel.’ In his letter to the Philadelphians, he says, ‘The beloved prophets referred to him, but *the gospel* is the perfection of incorruption.’ In his letter to the church at Smyrna, he says, ‘Ye ought to hearken to the prophets, but especially to *the gospel*.’ In both these places I think he means our gospels. So that in his time men had them, and looked upon them as *holy books*.”

“ Uncle Philip, I wish you would tell us how many of our books Ignatius has taken words out of, for you did not read all. I just wrote down on this piece of paper as you went on, those which Mary read :—they were *Ephesians*, *Matthew*, *1 Corinthians*, *Philippians*, *1 Thessalonians*, *James*, and *1 Peter*.”

“ Very good ; I am much pleased that you were so attentive, and I am glad that you spoke of it, as otherwise I should have forgotten to mention to you all the books in our New Testament, which he refers to or copies. Besides those you have named, there are *John’s gospel*, *Acts*, *Romans*, *2 Corinthians*, *Galatians*, *Colossians*, *2 Timothy*, *Titus*, *Phile-*

mon, *Hebrews*, 1 and 3 *John*, making in all nineteen.

“Good day, now, my dear children; when you come again, I will show you a picture, and tell you a story about another good old man.”

“Farewell, Uncle Philip.”

CONVERSATION V.

Uncle Philip and the Children talk about Polycarp; and a story is told about a good woman named Perpetua: and of some Boys and Girls who were killed for being Christians.

“WELL, Uncle Philip, here we all are again, you see.”

“Yes, and I am very glad to see you: because I cannot help thinking you must be interested in what I tell you, or you would stay away.”

“Oh, we are very much pleased, and ready to hear all you have to say. That was a

sorrowful story about Ignatius, which you told us the last time we were here ; but we liked it, though it was sad : and you said you would tell us more like it, of the sufferings of the first Christians. Will you do it to-day, Uncle Philip ?”

“ Yes, my dear children, before you go I will. But let us first take up one more witness, and see what he has said : he, is the last one of those who lived in the first hundred years after Christ whom I shall examine. His life, too, is a story which will show you how good men were persecuted for being Christians ; and I am sure you will be pleased to hear something about him, when you know who the person is of whom I speak.”

“ Who is it, Uncle Philip ?”

“ His name was Polycarp.”

“ What, the friend of Ignatius, whom he found at Smyrna, and who was taught by St. John himself ?”

“ The very same.”

“ Oh, let us hear of him, by all means. It is right, as he was the friend of Ignatius, that he should come next to him. Let us hear about Polycarp, and then you may tell us the stories you promised us.”

"Agreed, my children. We will then first consider

THE TESTIMONY OF POLYCARP.

I shall begin by giving you some account of his life.

"Polycarp was born somewhere in the East, but the precise place and the exact time of his birth I cannot find out. But when quite young, we know, from his own writings as well as those of others, that he was taught by St. John, and lived with him. As soon as he was old enough he was made a minister, and not long afterward he was made the bishop or chief minister of Smyrna, by St. John himself; and he continued in that place for seventy-four years. Polycarp, my children, must have had every opportunity to know what books Christians had written, what they believed, and what true Christianity was. Give me that book, and I will read some parts of it to you which speak of Polycarp."

"Who wrote that book, Uncle Philip?"

"A man whose name I have mentioned before. It was Irenæus, who knew Polycarp very well, and had talked with him often, for he studied under him : but listen for yourselves

to what he says about him. ‘Polycarp,’ says Irenæus, ‘teaches the same things, who was not only taught by the apostles, and had talked with many who had seen Christ, but was also, by the apostles, appointed bishop of the church of Smyrna, in Asia.’ Here is another place, too, in which he is mentioned. Irenæus is writing to a person named Florinus, and this is what he says :—‘For I saw you when I was very young, in the lower Asia with Polycarp ; for I remember better the affairs of that time than I do those which have happened lately. So that I can tell the place in which the blessed Polycarp sat and taught ; and his going out and coming in, and the manner of his life, and the form of his person, and the discourses he made to the people : and how he told of his conversation with John, and with others who had seen the Lord : and how he related to us their sayings, and what he had heard from them concerning the Lord, both concerning his miracles and his doctrine, as he had received them from the eyewitnesses. All which Polycarp related agreeably to the Scriptures.’”

“ Well, Uncle Philip, Polycarp had certainly

a good opportunity to know something about Christianity, as you said."

" Yes, indeed, he had : but let us now go on with his life, or rather with the latter part of it. Polycarp continued at Smyrna, doing all the good in his power ; he often saw or heard of the persecutions of the poor Christians ; until at last his own time to suffer came, and we have a full history of it in a letter which the church of Smyrna wrote about it. Several Christians in Smyrna had been put to death very cruelly ; at last the heathen people cried out that Polycarp should be killed. He heard it unmoved, and wished to remain where he was, until they should come to take him. But the people of his church would not let him stay in the city. They carried him to a country-house a few miles distant, where he was constantly occupied with his friends in praying. At last it was found out where he was, and the officers came to take him. In that country the houses had flat roofs, and Polycarp, who was in the upper story, might have got on his roof and passed to that of the house next to his, and so escaped ; but he would not. The officers came late in the evening, after the good old

man had gone to bed ; he rose and came down stairs to them, and spoke so kindly to them, that even they felt sorry, and said they thought it was useless to trouble a man so old and quiet ; but they were obliged to take him, as they had been ordered.

" Polycarp ordered a supper to be prepared for them ; and asked them just to allow him one hour to pray, without being disturbed. They told him he might have it ; when he prayed so fervently, that the officers, who felt pity for him, did not interrupt him for two hours. At length they took him, and placing him on an ass, they set out for the city. As they came near Smyrna, the chief magistrate was riding out in his carriage, and met him. He knew Polycarp to be a good and harmless man, and I suppose he pitied him also : at any rate, he asked the old man to get into the carriage with him ; and Polycarp did so. As they rode together, the magistrate (who was anxious to save him) endeavoured to persuade him to renounce Christianity. ' What harm,' says he, ' can it be for you to say, our lord the emperor, and to offer sacrifices to the gods ? ' Polycarp at first was silent, but at length replied, ' I cannot do what you advise me.'

"Finally, the magistrate became very angry, because Polycarp remained firm, and with some very harsh language, he pushed him out of the carriage, and the old man, falling on the ground, hurt one of his legs very much. He arose, but said not a word to the magistrate, and quietly went on with the guard, as if nothing had happened. At last he reached the city, and was carried at once before the court. The governor said to him, 'Are you Polycarp?' He answered, 'I am.' Then he said to him, 'Swear, curse Christ, and I will set you free.' The old man answered 'Eighty and six years have I served him, and he never injured me; how can I curse my King and my Saviour?'"

"Oh, Uncle Philip! was not that a beautiful answer?"

"Beautiful, indeed, my children: and I never think of Polycarp's answer without remembering that it would be hard to find the person who could say that Christ had ever injured him. But I am sorry that it is not difficult to find many who hate, and would injure Christ. The governor went on, and pressed him still to deny Christ. 'No,' says Polycarp, 'for I tell thee freely I am a Chris-

tian.' Then the governor ordered it to be proclaimed that Polycarp had owned himself a Christian, and must therefore die.

"When the crowd heard this, they shouted for joy, and desired that he might be thrown to the wild beasts ; but as it did not happen to be the time for the public games, when wild beasts were kept for men to fight with, their wish was not granted ; and Polycarp was ordered, at their request, to be burnt alive. As soon as the order was given, off ran the Jews and heathens to the baths, and to the different market-places, where wood was kept, and in a very short time gathered together a pile for burning the poor old man. When they brought him to it, they were going to nail him fast, but he said to them, 'Leave me thus, I pray, unfastened : He who has enabled me to abide the fire, will give me strength also to remain firm on the stake.' Then he asked them to give him time to pray. Would you like to hear the prayer which he made ?"

"Oh yes, Uncle Philip ; what did he say ? Did he pray that God would punish his wicked persecutors ?"

"Oh no ; this was his prayer :—' O Lord !

Almighty God! the Father of thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ! through whom we have received the knowledge of thee! God of the angels, and of the whole creation, of the whole human race, and of the saints who live before thy presence! I thank thee that thou hast thought me worthy, this day, and this hour, to share the cup of Christ, among the number of thy witnesses, for the resurrection to eternal life, both of soul and body, in the incorruption of the Holy Ghost:—among whom may I be received into thy presence this day, as an acceptable sacrifice, as thou, the faithful and true God hast ordained, promised, and art now fulfilling. For this, and for every thing, I praise thee, I bless thee, I glorify thee, through the eternal High-priest, Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son, by whom, and with whom, in the Holy Spirit, be glory to thee, both now and for ever. Amen.'

"As soon as he said amen, they set fire to the wood, and it blazed up, but arched around him like the sail of a ship filled with wind; and one of those present, seeing that his body was not burnt, plunged a sword into him, when he fell down into the flames and was soon consumed. The Christians gathered up

what was left of his bones, and buried them ; and this was the end of Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, in the year of our Lord 167, though some think it was in the year 148 ; and when he was supposed to be about one hundred and twenty years old."

" And a very interesting story it is, Uncle Philip, and we thank you for it. And now tell us, if you please, what he wrote that has come down to our times."

" There is but one writing of his of which I know any thing, and that is a letter to the church of the Philippians. Now let us see how it will agree with our New Testament. Here I read, ' Do we not know that the saints shall judge the world, as Paul teaches ? ' Now, Mary, I think you will find that Paul does teach that, in 1 Corinthians vi. 12."

" Yes, Uncle Philip, he does :—‘ *Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world ?* ’ ”

" Well, here Polycarp speaks again :—‘ For I trust that ye are well exercised in the Holy Scriptures ; as in these scriptures it is said,— *Be ye angry, and sin not.* And, *Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.* ’ Mary, look at Ephesians iv. 26."

" I have found it, Uncle Philip :—‘ *Be ye*

angry, and sin not : let not the sun go down upon your wrath.'"

"Uncle Philip, I have thought of something."

"What is it?"

"Why, Polycarp calls the Epistle to the Ephesians, *Holy Scriptures.*"

"Very true ; and I should think that they were in pretty general use, too, when Polycarp hopes that all the people in the church at Philippi, were well exercised in them. But let us go on. St. Paul, you know, wrote an epistle to these same Philippians. Let us see if Polycarp knew any thing about such a letter. I think he did, for here he says,—‘For neither I, nor any one else like me, can come up to the wisdom of the blessed and renowned Paul, who, when absent, wrote unto you an epistle, into which, if ye look, you will be able to edify yourselves in the faith which has been delivered to you.’"

"Ah, it is plain enough, Uncle Philip, that Polycarp believed that Paul wrote the Epistle to the Philippians."

"So I think : but let us proceed. Here is a sentence from Polycarp’s letter,—‘Remembering what the Lord said, teaching :—Judge

not, that ye be not judged ; forgive, and ye shall be forgiven ; be ye merciful, that ye may obtain mercy ; with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again ; and blessed are the poor, and they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of God.' Now, Mary, read first Matthew v. 3."

"It says,—‘*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*’"

"Now verse 7."

"*Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.*"

"Now verse 10."

"*Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*"

"Now Matthew vii. 1 and 2."

"*Judge not, that ye be not judged. And with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.*"

"Now turn to Luke vi. 20."

"*Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.*"

"Once more, Mary ; the 36th, 37th, and 38th verses of that chapter."

"*Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father*

also is merciful. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged,—forgive, and ye shall be forgiven : for with the same measure that ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.”

“ Well, my children, every one of these passages which Mary has just read for us are put down in our New Testament as the words of Christ. So now you may see for yourselves where Polycarp found out that the Lord had taught such things as Polycarp said he had taught. Now we will read from the good old man again.

“ Here he says,—‘ As the Lord hath said : the Spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.’ ”

“ Uncle Philip, the Lord did say that to the disciples when they were sleepy, and could not watch : for I read it to my mother, last Sunday, in the Bible.”

“ I know he said it, and you may find an account of it in Matthew xxvi. 41.”

“ But I read it in Mark, Uncle Philip.”

“ I dare say you did, for it is also recorded in Mark xiv. 38.”

“ Here again, Polycarp says,—‘ Whom God hath raised, having loosed the pains of hell.’ Look at Acts ii. 24.”

"It is here, sir,—‘*Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death.*’”

“Well, here is another passage,—‘And we must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.’ You will find the same words, Mary, if you will look, in Romans xiv. 10.”

“I have found it, Uncle Philip:—‘*We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.*’”

“My children, I could go on for an hour giving you quotations from the New Testament by Polycarp; but I wish not to fatigue you, and so you shall have but one more:—‘In whom, though you see him not, ye believe, and believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.’ Now look at the first Epistle of Peter i. 8.”

“It is here, Uncle Philip;—‘*In whom, though now you see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.*’”

“Uncle Philip, in how many places does Polycarp quote from our New Testament, or allude to it?”

“In thirty-eight different places, my children, though his letter is but a short one. Besides this, he calls the gospels and epistles

the oracles of the Lord, and the Holy Scriptures."

" Well, now, Uncle Philip, I wish to write down, as I did before, the names of the books from which Polycarp has copied. Will you be so good as to mention them ?"

" Yes, I have written them for you on this bit of paper. They are Matthew, Luke, 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians ; these he quotes : and he refers, or alludes, to Acts, Romans, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, 1 and 2 Timothy, 1 Peter, and 1 John. And now, my children, do you think anybody knew of the books of our New Testament in the first hundred years after Christ ?"

" Knew of them ! why certainly they did, Uncle Philip. You have read to us a great many sentences which show that they must have known the very same things which are written in our Bible, and you said that you could have read many more."

" Yes, my dear children, I think that I could have read nearly, if not quite, five hundred ; and I have no doubt that the greater part of the books in our New Testament were not only in general use towards the end of the

first hundred years after our Saviour, but that they had also before that time been collected into one volume.

"And now, my children, I have one thing more to say before I tell you the stories which I promised you ; it is this :—there is not another ancient book in the world which has as much proof from four authors, living about the time when it appeared, to show that it is genuine, as can be produced for the New Testament,—from Barnabas, and Clement, and Ignatius, and Polycarp. I wish you to remember this. And now for the stories.

"The first one which I shall relate is about a Christian woman named Vivia Perpetua. She was a young lady belonging to a noble family, and was but little more than twenty years old when she was put into prison for being a Christian. Her father was a heathen, but her mother was a Christian. I do not know what her husband was : but she was very much beloved by all her relations, and at the time of her imprisonment she had a young child, an infant at the breast. Before she was imprisoned she was kept for some days under a guard ; and during this time her poor old father visited her, and as he loved her

very much, he most earnestly entreated of her to give up her religion, and save her life. There was a jar, or vessel to hold water, in the room; she pointed to it, and said, ‘Father, can you give any other name than jar to that vessel?’ He answered, No. ‘No more can I call myself by any other name than that of Christian,’ said she. The poor old father, half-distracted, threw himself upon her, and would have done her some serious injury, in his rage, had he not been prevented.”

“For some days she saw no more of her father. When they put her into the prison, she said that at first she was very much terrified, for she had never before seen such a place of horrible darkness. She had always lived in great comfort, for her family was rich: besides, the crowd of prisoners was very great, and the weather was warm; and she was very anxious about her infant, which she had with her. Her friends, however, by paying money, got her removed to a more comfortable part of the prison; and then, for several days, Perpetua said, she was as happy as she ever was; for God comforted her, so that the prison became a palace to her. At length, a day was fixed for her trial, and her

aged and heart-broken father visited her in the prison, the night before, and again tried to persuade her to renounce Christianity. ‘If I have brought you up,’ said he, ‘to this age,—if I have loved you more than I ever did your brothers, do not take away from me my respectability.’ The old man thought that if his daughter was publicly put to death, his family would be disgraced ; so he went on talking to her :—‘ Think of your mother, and your aunt, and your little son, who must die if you are taken away : oh ! give up your pride and obstinacy, or you will kill us all.’ And then the sorrowful old man took her hands, and kissing them again and again, he at last fell on his knees at her feet, and wept as if his heart was broken. He called his daughter the mistress of his happiness, and of all that was dear to him. All this, as you may well suppose, my children, distressed Perpetua very much : but she could not deny her God ; so she could only say to her father, that when she was brought before the court, God would order every thing as he thought best. Here is a picture of the old man visiting his daughter in the prison.



Perpetua in Prison.

"The next day Perpetua was carried before the judge; and after several other prisoners had been examined, just as it came to her turn, her poor old father suddenly stood before her with her child in his arms, and once more began to entreat her. Even the judge was moved when he saw this, and spoke to Perpetua. 'Spare the old age of your father, and the helplessness of your babe,' said he: 'sacrifice to our gods.' Perpetua answered, 'I will do nothing of that kind.' 'Are you a Christian?' said the judge. 'I am,' was the reply of this noble woman. When she said this, her father tried to drag her by force out of the court; and the judge ordered him to be driven away. One of the officers struck him a violent blow with his staff. 'Oh!' said Perpetua, 'I felt that blow as if it had fallen on myself, to see my father so treated in his old age.'

"The prisoners were all sentenced to be thrown to the wild beasts, and were ordered back to the prison until the time came. Perpetua sent to her father, to ask for her child that it might be with her as long as she was suffered to live; but he would not send it. He however visited her himself, and tried, as before, to

prevail upon her to renounce her religion ; but she continued firm to the last. After a time, the day came for her death, and Perpetua, with another woman named Felicitas, was put into a net and thrown to a wild cow. The animal gored her with its horns, and threw her wounded upon the ground. She arose, and very calmly gathered her hair, which was flying in all directions, and fixed it as well as she could with her hands, so that they might all see she was perfectly collected. None of the prisoners, but one, was killed by the wild beasts ; so the people cried out that they should be put to death with a sword. Perpetua was brought forward again, and the last act of her life showed that she was to the very end the same fearless and noble Christian woman. The man who was ordered to kill her was very much agitated, and trembled so much that he missed his aim, and wounded her with his sword unnecessarily. When she saw this, she took hold of his hand, which had a dagger in it, and guided it to her own throat. He thrust it in, and she fell dead at his feet. And this, my children, was the end of Vivia Perpetua. And now tell me, what do you think of it ?”

"Why, Uncle Philip, she was very brave, for a woman."

"And what made her brave, my child? Do you suppose she thought her religion was true, or false?"

"Oh, she must have thought it was true."

"So I think, my children; and more than that, I believe that she felt it to be true in her own heart. Now a man may know that the Christian religion is true, and yet live as if it were false. Such a man does not feel it to be true, for he does not obey it, and therefore it gives him no comfort. A man's *head* may understand well enough *why* it is all true; but a man's *heart* must feel it to be so before he will try to obey it."

"Well, dear Uncle Philip, there is one thing I wish you would tell us. Now I believe it is all true; how shall I feel it, so that I will love to obey it?"

"God will help you, my children, if you ask of him. Pray to him for the Holy Spirit, and you may learn more in a short space than Uncle Philip could teach you in a lifetime. I know of nothing else but prayer, by which we can be brought to feel the truth and the comfort of Christianity; and I am

sure I know of nothing better worth asking for, than the helps of the Holy Spirit ; and I read in the Bible that God is very kind towards us, and willing to give us the Spirit, if we ask of Him in sincerity, and in the name of his blessed Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. And I have no doubt that Perpetua was filled with Christian courage, because she had prayed ; and God had given unto her the Spirit to instruct, and to comfort, and to strengthen her. But it is time to go on with another story : before I begin it, however, as I wish you not to fall into mistakes, let me tell you that I selected Perpetua's story to relate, merely because I thought you would like it, as it is a striking story."

"And so we do like it, Uncle Philip."

"Very well, I am glad you do ; but you must remember, that as to the *time* when she was put to death, it was not in the first hundred years, of which we have been talking ; but it was very soon after the year 200. It is not of much consequence, but still I wish you not to be misled, and to hear from me nothing but what I believe to be true. And now I think I must tell you the history of a Christian child, who was put to death for his religion : would you like to hear it ?"

"Oh yes, Uncle Philip, by all means. Was it a boy or a girl?"

"The story I am thinking of is about a boy, whose name was Cyril. But there are some also concerning girls, and perhaps we may talk of them hereafter."

"Well, Uncle Philip, go on now about Cyril, if you please."

"This Cyril lived, my children, about the year 257, at a place called Cæsarea. There were several places of that name, but this was in Cappadocia. Somehow or other the child had heard about Jesus Christ; and it was not long after that he began to pray to Him. His father was no Christian, and therefore he threatened to punish his son, if he did not cease praying to Jesus. The child would not cease, but prayed to him more than ever; and then his father beat him. He still, however, persevered; the other boys of that place who knew him, laughed at him, and at last hated him for being a Christian; and finally his father turned him out of doors, and drove him away from his house, without giving him any thing."

"Stop there a moment, Uncle Philip, if you please. There is a boy in our school

just like those boys who hated Cyril. He laughed at me because I told him that I would not for a great deal go to bed without saying my prayers."

"Then he acted very wickedly; and you must remember, whenever you say your prayers, to pray for that boy, and ask God to make him better. That is your duty: will you do it?"

"Why, yes, I will, Uncle Philip; but I was very angry with him for laughing at me."

"I dare say you were. But his laughing did you no harm, though your own anger did you much. Who was it that said 'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us?'"

"It was our blessed Saviour, sir. I see, I see, Uncle Philip; you need not say any more; my duty is to forgive him: and I will ask God to help me to do so."

"Right, my dear child: adhere to that rule and God will bless you. No man's enmity can then harm you, but it will tend to make your soul better and happier. But let me go on with Cyril, who, I dare say, very fully forgave his young acquaintances who hated him without a cause. When the poor boy

was driven from his father's house, he was soon taken by the officers and carried before the judge. He was enraged against Cyril, but still, as he was merely a child, he thought that he could coax or frighten him out of his religion. So, says he, 'My child, I will forgive your faults, your father shall take you back again, and when he is dead you shall have all his estate, if you will act like a sensible boy, and give up your Christianity.' The blessed boy answered him, 'I am willing that you should find fault with me, and blame me. My father has turned me out of our house, and I am willing to bear it for God's sake; for when I die, he will give me a better house than my father's: and I am not afraid to die.' The judge then thought that he would frighten him: so he ordered the officers to bind him, and carry him off to be burnt; but he had also ordered them privately not to burn him, but merely to show him the fire. When they returned with him, they told the judge that the child did not even shed a tear, or show any alarm at the fire. The judge then spoke to him again: 'My child, you have seen the fire; be wise, and go back to your father's house and fortune.' The fear-

less lad, answering in a voice as firm as its boyish tones would allow, made even the officers, who were accustomed to persecutions and cruelty, weep when they heard him. ‘It was not kind,’ said he to the judge, ‘to bring me back again ; I am not afraid of your fire. I wish not for my father’s house. The fire would send me to a better house than his ; therefore, kill me, and let me go to it.’ The judge then ordered him to be put to death, and it was done. And now, with this story of Cyril, I think it is time to stop for the present. So good-by to you, my children.”

“Good day, Uncle Philip.”

CONVERSATION VI.

Uncle Philip teaches Children to be humble, and reads to them out of the writings of four good old men.

"UNCLE PHILIP, I have been thinking much about that story of Cyril."

"Well, and what have you thought?"

"Why, Cyril must have felt that what he believed about Christ was true; and Cyril, you know, was but a boy."

"Very good: and what does that prove?"

"It proves, I think, that a boy may be religious as well as a man."

"Yes; a boy, no doubt, may be very religious, and many good men of whom we read were pious from a very early age. King Edward, of whom I told you, was an instance of a very religious boy. But let us be careful here not to make a mistake. I have read the

lives of some children, who were represented as having all the religious knowledge of very aged Christians. Now I do not exactly believe all these stories. I think that God will teach a child who prays to him, to see his duty in most cases, and he will give him strength, too, to do his duty when he sees it; and such a *child* may know more about Christianity than a *wicked man* knows; but he will not know half as much as a good man does, who prays as fervently as the child can. Little boys and girls have much to learn in religion, as well as in every thing else, for people are not born pious: now children must learn by degrees, for their minds must grow, just as much as their bodies, and some things in religion they cannot understand until their minds get older. If we had no heads to think, I believe that we should know very little about religion. One of the greatest purposes for which God has given us reason is, that we may think of, and examine, and understand his religion; but if a little child, whose reason is very little, can understand all about it, I do not see what use there was in giving reason for this purpose to men and women. If the child can understand it with-

out reason, surely his father and mother can ; and yet God gave them reason to understand it. Do you know what I mean ?”

“ Yes, Uncle Philip : you believe that though a child cannot know as much about God and religion as an old person, yet, if he be a good child, and prays to God to teach him, and to help him to be good, that God will help him, and he may be religious.”

“ Yes, my dear children, I am sure of it, for God can make praise come ‘out of the mouths of babes and sucklings ;’ and such a child may have the Spirit of God, and may trust in our blessed Saviour, and know, too, what he is doing, and yet there will be a great deal in religion which he cannot understand. And before I go on to something else, let me tell you, there is one thing, my children, which such a child will not do.”

“ What is that, Uncle Philip ?”

“ Such a child will never undertake to teach Christians older than himself. He will rather seek to be taught by them. And now are you ready to go back to the old books again ?”

“ Yes, Uncle Philip. Will you not have some more stories to tell us about those first Christians ?”

"Very probably I shall ; but are you listening for the sake of the stories merely ?"

"No, no, sir ; but I do like the stories, Uncle Philip ; and when you tell us one about any of these old men, it helps me to remember what you read out of their writings."

"That is just what I wished it should do. Now let us proceed. We have done with the first hundred years, let us take the next hundred."

"Are there many writers in the next hundred years, Uncle Philip ?"

"Many more than in the first : there are between twenty and thirty, but I shall read from a few only, and the first which I shall bring forward is,

THE TESTIMONY OF PAPIAS.

"Papias flourished between the years 110 and 116, and I shall just read what he says as to certain facts. 'Matthew,' says he, 'wrote the divine oracles in the Hebrew tongue.' You will remember that I told you some learned men have supposed that Matthew's gospel was written first in Hebrew : if it was, it was very soon translated into Greek, for all the places which I have read to

you out of the writers of the first century, when Matthew is quoted, are in Greek, and just like the Greek Testament which we now have. At any rate, here is proof that in the year 115, Matthew's gospel was known, and people called it his. In another place, Papias is speaking about St. Mark, and this is what he says:—‘And this the presbyter said—’”

“Who does he mean by the presbyter, Uncle Philip?”

“The whole passage shows that he means John; but let me go on:—‘And this the presbyter said:—Mark, being the interpreter of Peter, wrote exactly what he remembered, but not in the order in which things were spoken or done by Christ. He followed Peter, who made his discourses for the profit of those who heard him, but not in the way of a regular history of our Lord’s words. However, Mark committed no mistake, for one thing he made his care, to omit nothing which he had heard (from Peter), and to say nothing false in what he related:’ this is what Papias says about St. Mark.”

“Uncle Philip, I think that Mark would show what he wrote to Peter; would you not think so?”

"Yes; and we happen to have proof that he did do so. Give me that large book. This book was written by a man named Clement, of Alexandria, who lived in the second hundred years, not long after Papias; and here is a place in which he says that Peter read over the book of Mark, and said it was all correct. So here we have proof that Mark's gospel was known as far back as from 110 to 116, and John puts its credit upon the fact that it related truly what Peter had said.

"I shall say no more now about Papias, because I am anxious to bring another witness.

THE TESTIMONY OF JUSTIN MARTYR.

"Uncle Philip, why was he called Martyr; was he put to death?"

"Yes. Justin was a very learned man, born in the year 103, and killed about the year 164. He was not a Christian until he was thirty years old. He had travelled a great deal, and had every opportunity of seeing how the Christians acted, and of finding out what they believed. When the Roman emperors were cruelly persecuting the poor Christians, Justin wrote two apologies for

them. In his first apology there is this sentence:—‘At the same time, an angel was sent to the same virgin, saying, Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb by the Holy Ghost; and thou shalt bring forth a son, and he shall be called the Son of the Highest. And thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins: as they have taught who have written the history of all things concerning our Saviour Jesus Christ, and we believe them.’

“Here is another place in the same apology:—‘But lest we should seem to deceive you, it may be fit to lay before you some of the doctrines of Christ. His words were short, for he was no sophist—’”

“What is a sophist, Uncle Philip?”

“A cunning man, who seems to reason fairly and truly, when he does not;—‘he was no sophist, but his word was the power of God: he spoke in this manner’—And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out: for it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of heaven with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into eternal fire.’ Now Christ did say these words, my children, and they are written in our gospels.

"Now I will read you another place, where in the same page he quotes Matthew, and Mark, and Luke. 'And in other words he says, *Depart from me into outer darkness, which the Father has prepared for Satan and his angels.*' These words are in Matthew xxv. 41. 'And again he said, in other words, *I give unto you power to tread upon serpents, and scorpions, and venomous beasts, and upon all the powers of the enemy.*' These you will find in Luke x. 19. 'And before he was crucified, he said, *The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the scribes and Pharisees, and be crucified, and rise again the third day.*' These words are in Mark viii. 31.

"Besides these, I am pretty sure that he had John's gospel, too ; for in one place, where he is speaking of John the Baptist, he says, 'They suspected him to be the Christ, to whom he said, I am not the Christ, but the voice of one crying, there will come one mightier than me, whose shoe-latchets I am not worthy to bear.' I think he learned this from John i. 20, 23, 27. And here is a sentence which he must have got from St. John's gospel, for it is not written anywhere else in

the Bible, but in John iii., ‘For Christ himself has said, *Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.* Now let me show you some facts from Justin’s writings, and then we will pass on to the next testimony. Here are two sentences which I wish you to notice particularly:—‘For the apostles in the memoirs composed by them, which are called gospels, have thus delivered it, that Jesus commanded them to take bread, and give thanks.’ That is one; here is the other. He is giving an account to the Roman emperor of the manner in which the Christians worshipped; and he says, ‘The memoirs of the apostles, or the writings of the prophets, are read according as the time allows: and when the reader has ended, the president makes a discourse, exhorting to the imitation of such excellent things.’

“So you perceive that Justin had all our gospels; that apostles wrote them; that they were collected together, they were open for everybody to see them, they were read in public worship, and Christians were instructed out of them. Besides, I think that we learn from Justin, that this was probably the practice of *all* the Christian churches; for he had

travelled much, and seen most of them. He was giving an account of Christians to the Roman emperor ; and he knew if he told an untruth, it would be found out immediately. We learn, too, that the people must have thought much of these gospels, or they would not have been instructed out of them. And besides the gospels, I have now to tell you that Justin refers to, or quotes, Acts, 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, Hebrews, 2 Peter, and Revelations ; and he says expressly that this last was written by John. Now let us proceed to

THE TESTIMONY OF IRENEUS.

“ Do you remember my speaking to you of Polycarp ? ”

“ Oh yes, Uncle Philip ; very well.”

“ This Ireneus, then, was a pupil of Polycarp, and the first thing which I shall read from him is a long sentence in which he mentions all the gospels. Here it is :—‘ For we have not received the knowledge of the way of our salvation by any others than those by whom the gospel has been brought to us : which gospel they first preached, and afterward, by

the will of God, committed to writing that it might be for time to come the pillar and foundation of our faith. For after that our Lord rose from the dead, and they (the apostles) were endued from above with the power of the Holy Ghost coming down upon them, they received a perfect knowledge of all things. They then went forth to all the ends of the earth, declaring to men the blessings of heavenly peace, having all of them, and every one alike, the gospel of God. Matthew, then among the Jews, wrote a gospel in their own language, while Peter and Paul were preaching the gospel at Rome, and founding a church there. And after their departure, Mark also, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, delivered to us in writing the things that had been preached by Peter : and Luke, the companion of Paul, put down in a book the gospel preached by Paul. Afterward John, the disciple of the Lord, who also leaned upon his breast, he likewise published a gospel while he dwelt at Ephesus, in Asia.' ”

“ Why, Uncle Philip, it is plain that this man had the gospels, and knew, too, who wrote them.”

“ Yes ; but here is another passage which

makes it plainer still : ‘The gospel according to John declares Christ’s glorious and primary generation from the Father—*In the beginning was the word.* But the gospel according to Luke, being of a priestly character, begins with Zacharias the priest offering incense to God. Matthew relates his generation according to man—*The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.* Mark begins from the prophetic spirit which came down from above to men, saying,—*The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ as it is written in Esaias the prophet?* What say you now, children?’

“Oh, he had our gospels, for he tells us the beginning of his, and I believe they are just like ours.”

“They are so. The Acts of the Apostles is a book very often quoted by Ireneus, and he says expressly that Luke wrote it. As to St. Paul’s epistles, he quotes thirteen of them, and says that Paul wrote them. I have written down on this paper some of his sentences, with the sentences from the New Testament by the side of them, that you might see them all at once; and if you will seek

the places in the New Testament, you will find them all correct. Here Mary, read this paper."

IRENEUS.

"This same thing Paul has explained, writing to the Romans: *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, separated to the gospel of God.*"

"And again, writing of Israel to the Romans, he says:—*Whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is God over all blessed for ever.*"

"This also Paul manifestly shows in his Epistle to the Corinthians, saying,—*Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud.*"

"Paul, in the second to the Corinthians:—*In whom the god of this world hath blinded the eyes of them that believe not.*"

"The apostle Paul says, in the Epistle to the Galatians:—*Wherefore then serveth the law of works? It was added until the seed should come to whom the promise was made.*"

"As the blessed Paul says in the Epistle to the Ephesians:—*For we are members of*

ST. PAUL.

"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God." Romans i. 1.

"Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all God blessed for ever." Romans ix. 5.

"Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant how that all our fathers were under the cloud." 1 Corinthians x. 1.

"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not." 2 Corinthians iv. 4.

"Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made." Galatians iii. 19.

"For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." Ephesians v. 30.

IRENEUS.

his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."

"Again he (Paul) says, in the Epistle to the Colossians:—
Luke, the beloved physician, greets you."

ST. PAUL.

"Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas greet you." Colossians iv. 14.

"Thank you, Mary. I have written down these sentences, my children, merely to show you how Ireneus quotes the epistles of St. Paul: and in this manner he mentions by name every epistle of St. Paul's except Philemon and Hebrews. He quotes Hebrews, but does not say that it is Paul's. Besides these, he quotes James; 1 and 2 Peter (and says expressly, the first was written by Peter); 1 and 2 John he quotes as John's; Jude, and Revelation, which he also quotes as John's."

"Uncle Philip, all this is very strong proof that Ireneus had our New Testament."

"There can be no doubt of it, my children, in the minds of honest people. But I have not yet done with him. I think that in his day, the books of the New Testament were collected together into one; for he speaks in his writings of 'the scriptures'; 'the gospels'; 'the divine scriptures'; 'the divine oracles';"

'the scriptures of the Lord.' He has also this expression,—'The code of the New Testament, as well as the Old.'

"Now, my children, remember that this man was taught by Polycarp, and Polycarp was taught by St. John himself, and was the companion of the apostles. Here then is a man who had the very best opportunity in his day of knowing what the apostles did, and what books they held sacred, and who was supposed, at that early period, to have written these books; and we find him well acquainted with every book in our New Testament except two short ones, Philemon and 3 John, which he probably had no special occasion to use: and we find him also in every case but one or two, naming as the authors the very persons whom we at this day think were the authors.

"Now I shall read to you out of one more old book, and then we will stop for this morning. We come now to

THE TESTIMONY OF TERTULLIAN."

"Who was this Tertullian, Uncle Philip?"

"He was born at Carthage, which was then the principal city of Africa, and studied the

Roman law. He was a very good Greek scholar also; though the books out of which I shall read to you are in Latin. Here is something about the gospels:—‘To conclude, among the apostles, John and Matthew teach us the faith, among apostolic men, Mark and Luke refresh it.’”

“Uncle Philip, why does he call Mark and Luke apostolic men?”

“Because they were the companions of Christ’s apostles. John and Matthew were the companions of Christ himself. But let me go on; here is what he says about the Acts of the Apostles:—‘So that afterward we find in the Acts of the Apostles, that they who had John’s baptism, had not received the Holy Ghost, nor so much as heard whether there was any.’ Now this is in the nineteenth chapter of Acts, at the beginning.

“He had seen Paul’s epistles, too, and he believed that Paul wrote them; for here he says,—‘Let us see what milk the Corinthians received from Paul, to what rule the Galatians were reduced, what the Philippians read, what the Thessalonians, the Ephesians, and likewise what the Romans recite.’ The fact is, my children, he copies from nearly

every one of Paul's epistles, and says that Paul was the author. There are a great many well-known old books, out of which all the writers in the world put together have not copied so much as Tertullian has out of the New Testament. Did you ever hear of a man named Cicero?"

"Oh yes, sir; he was a great orator."

"Well, we have his speeches, and nobody doubts that they are his; and yet there is not half as much proof for these speeches, as we can get out of Tertullian for the Bible. And now I think you must be tired: but before you go, let me hear whether you understand what I have been about."

"Yes, sir, I think we do. You wished us to see that in the first hundred years after Christ was killed, the people had the same New Testament books which we now have, and so you read to us parts of their writings, in which they copied what they had."

"Very good: and were the sentences which they copied like to any in our New Testament?"

"Oh yes, sir, exactly the same. And then you wished us to see that in the next hundred years it was the same thing; and so you have been reading to us this morning out of

the books which were written in the second hundred years after Christ."

"And how do they agree with ours?"

"Very well, indeed, Uncle Philip."

"Have you any doubt then, my children, about our New Testament being known from the very time when our Saviour was crucified, for two hundred years at least?"

"No, sir."

"No more have I. And I could go on reading to you passages out of the writings of each hundred years since up to this very day; but it is hardly necessary, I think."

"Oh no, Uncle Philip; we are sure that you could read them to us, if you say so: and besides, if *they* had them in the *beginning*, and *we* have them *now*, they must have been taken care of by somebody, you know, in the mean time."

"A very sensible thought that: we have settled, then, that these books were written at the time at which they are said to have been written, and by the persons whose names are put to them as the authors."

"Yes, Uncle Philip."

"Very good. When you come again, we will go on to something else. Good morning."

"Good day, Uncle Philip."

CONVERSATION VII.

Uncle Philip talks with the Children about the New Testament being altered, and shows them that such a thing could not have been done.

"WELL, Uncle Philip, what more is there to say about our New Testament?"

"Oh, a great deal. We have found out that Matthew, and Mark, and the rest of the New Testament authors did write certain books, which tell about Christ; but how do you know that they have never been altered since?"

"Sure enough, they may have been changed in eighteen hundred years; and if they have, then we cannot tell how much we ought to believe in them."

"Certainly not. So now, if you please, we will try to find out about this matter of altering them. What do you say?"

"Oh yes, Uncle Philip, by all means."

"Then you must attend closely to what I am going to say. If they were ever altered, it must have been either while their authors were alive, or after they were dead ; must it not ?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then we will see first what chance there was to alter them while the apostles were *alive*. I think there was none. Were there any churches soon after Christ ascended to heaven ?"

"I suppose so, Uncle Philip."

"Yes, there is proof that within twenty years after he ascended, there were churches in most of the cities of the Roman Empire, and that reached over a large part of the world which was then known. Was it the constant practice to read the Scriptures in the churches ?"

"Yes, Uncle Philip. Justin Martyr said so in the place which you read."

"Very true ; and others said so before him. Did the first Christians think much of these Scriptures ?"

"Certainly, sir, they thought they were the words of God."

"Were there many copies of them made by these Christians?"

"Yes, sir; they wrote them, you said, with a pen."

"Very right. Now, then, if one man who had a copy thought of altering it, he must first have ceased to think it was the Word of God; must he not?"

"Yes, sir; for while he thought it God's Word, he would have thought it was wicked to change it."

"True. And if he had been wicked enough to do it, or if he had really thought there was a mistake in it which ought to be altered, other Christians would have known it, would they not?"

"Yes, sir."

"And as the apostles were then *alive*, would not some of the Christians have asked them whether it ought to be altered?"

"It would seem so, Uncle Philip; for they thought so much of these Scriptures, they would be very anxious to have them correct."

"No doubt of it. And suppose that after the apostle told them what was correct, any one of these Christians should still insist on altering his copy; he could not make people

believe that he was right, unless all the other copies which other Christians had were altered, too, so as to be just like his ; could he ?”

“ No, sir.”

“ And could he get hold of all their copies to alter ?”

“ No, sir, for they were scattered, you said, over a large part of the world, and the churches all had them ; and besides, the Christians who lived near him would not let him have their copies to alter : would they ?”

“ No, surely not. So, unless *all* the Christians who had copies should agree to make exactly the same alteration, no one man could do it without being found out and exposed. And now just think for a moment whether it was possible for *all* the Christians scattered through the Roman empire, with the Scriptures too in different languages (for they were translated very soon), all to agree exactly at one time to make exactly the same alteration, at the very time, too, when the men who wrote those Scriptures were *alive* to contradict them.”

“ Ah, Uncle Philip, it is plain enough that these books could not have been altered while

the apostles were living. If it were done at all, it was after they were dead."

"Well, let us now inquire into that. It is very plain, that as long as the very writings which the apostles first made with their own hands lasted, and were taken care of by the churches, that no alteration could be made without being found out; is it not?"

"Yes, Uncle Philip, it is, for these writings from their own hands were just the same as their words would have been if they had been alive, you know."

"I agree with you fully. Now you must remember that long before these original writings from the very hands of the apostles were destroyed and worn out by time, hundreds and hundreds of copies had been made and scattered far and wide into all the countries where there were any Christians; and some of these countries were far beyond the bounds of the Roman empire. Now I desire to know how it was possible for any man, or set of men, to make any alteration in these thousands of copies scattered all over the world, which should agree so precisely that nobody would ever find out that any such alteration had been made."

"Why, Uncle Philip, it does not seem very likely."

"Well, I think I can now show you that it was not only unlikely, but impossible. All Christians went to the New Testament to settle what they were to believe; did they not?"

"Yes, sir; Justin Martyr said that too."

"Very good. Now it is well known that very soon after Christianity came into the world, the Christians had different opinions about the meaning of the Scriptures; and there have been these differences ever since, up to this very day. Now when these Christians who differed wished to show each other that they were right, to what would they go?"

"Why, to the New Testament, Uncle Philip."

"To the *same* New Testament?"

"Yes, sir; if I understand you, they differed about the *meaning* of the words, and not about the *words themselves*."

"Exactly so. They had the very same Scriptures, but they did not always explain them in the same way. Now suppose one side had altered some places so as to bring more sentences from the New Testament

to help out the meaning for which they disputed; what would the other side have done?"

"Just turned to their copies, and showed them that they had altered the words."

"Precisely so. You see then how neither side could alter the book without being found out directly by the others. And so God made these very disputes among Christians conduce to the preservation of the New Testament."

"But, Uncle Philip, I am sorry they disputed."

"Christians, my dear children, are but men. I am sorry, too; but I am not now telling you whether this was right or wrong; I only wish you to see that the books of the New Testament could not be altered as long as they had such disputes."

"That is plain enough, Uncle Philip."

"Surely it is; for no matter how much they might have wished to alter them, the difficulties in the way were always too great. Just see what they would have had to do. In the first place, they would have had to get hold of all the copies in Palestine, and Egypt, and Asia Minor, and Greece, and Italy: in the next place, they had to alter these all

alike ; and, in the last place, they had to do this against men who had true copies by which to find out their alterations.

"But now I am going to show you, that even if all the Christian teachers in the world who had the Scriptures, had agreed among themselves to alter them, they could not have done it."

"Why not, Uncle Philip?"

"Why the *people* would have found it out. And here I must tell you that among the first Christians the people often knew the words of the New Testament, without having the book before them. I remember reading in a very old author, named Eusebius, who wrote a history of the church at its beginning, some very wonderful accounts of the people's knowledge of the Bible. He says there was a blind Christian who knew it so well that he could repeat whole books of the New Testament by heart. So I think the people would have found it out. What say you?"

"I think they would, Uncle Philip."

"Well, I have not done yet. If all the Christian teachers, and all the Christian people, had been so very wicked as to agree

among themselves to alter these books, still I think they could not have done it."

"What would have hindered them then, Uncle Philip?"

"Why, the Jews and the heathens around them, who hated Christianity, had true copies of these very books, for they quoted them and found fault with them: and if the Christians had altered them, these Jews and heathens would have told the world of it, and would have said that Christianity could not be true, for Christians were altering their own books.

"And, my children, even if teachers, and people, and Jews, and heathens had all agreed, I think they never could have done it, as long as there were those disputes among the first Christians, of which I told you. The churches in the East, and the churches in the West had a dispute in the fourth century, and in the ninth century this dispute was so obstinate, that it is not settled to this day. Now if the Eastern or Western churches had altered the Scriptures, the other side would have told the fact: but the truth is that the copies both in the East and West exactly agree."

"Well, Uncle Philip, what you have just

said, puts me in mind of something which I wished to ask you just now. I think that if there had been any alteration made by one side, the other would have mentioned it in some of the books which they wrote: and what I meant to ask you was, whether any old book tells us of any alterations?"

"No; and that question of yours has good sense in it. I was going to speak on that point, and I am much obliged to you for reminding me of it.

"You think then, that if the old books or histories say nothing of any alterations, it is not likely that any were made?"

"I do think so, Uncle Philip."

"Do you suppose that history mentions every thing, and that nothing ever happened but what is written in some history?"

"No, Uncle Philip; a thing might happen, and yet nobody write down in a book that it did happen. So that after all I begin to think that I was wrong."

"Do not give it up too soon; you were not wrong, my lad. *What kind of things* were likely not to be written down in the history? Let us look at that. If a thing was secret, and known to but very few people,

and they kept it to themselves, would that be written?"

"No, sir; for the man who was writing would not know any thing about it."

"True enough. And if the thing was very common and trifling, and people cared but little about it, would that thing be put down in history?"

"I think not."

"But suppose it was something which every body thought was of great importance, and that it was no secret, but very well known to everybody; would it be put in the book of history then?"

"Certainly it would."

"Then if some such great thing was said by men now, to have happened many hundred years ago, and no history of that time said one syllable about it, what would you think then?"

"Why, that it never did happen at all."

"And you would think correctly too. No this is precisely the case with these alterations of the Scripture. If any such alteration ever was made, it was a very important matter; every Christian in the world was likely to know it, and to talk about it, and some person

would have said it was right or wrong : it must have made a noise, and a great noise, too, in the world ; and yet nobody has ever mentioned a word about it in his writings, though he has put down fifty other things of not half as much importance."

" I see very clearly how it is, Uncle Philip. It all depends, upon the question, whether the thing done was of *importance* ; if it were, it would surely be mentioned in some of the books written about that time."

" Yes. Let me try to make it plainer still ; suppose that five hundred or a thousand years from this time somebody should write a book and put in it, that in the year 1833, all the people in these United States agreed that the president should be a king, and that there should be no congress any more, but a parliament, like that in England ; and that this state of things lasted for twenty years, and then was altered back again. Now if people one thousand years hence should look into the histories of our country for this year, 1833, and find no such thing written there, ought they to believe the story ?"

" No, Uncle Philip, for it would be a great lie ; and we all know it."

"Yes, yes, that is clear enough ; it would be a falsehood, for we know that no such thing ever happened : but if it had happened, do you suppose that a matter which concerned our whole country so much would have been written down by nobody ?"

"Oh no ; for I know if we had a king everybody would be talking about it, and the newspapers would be full of it."

"But, my children, there is something else yet, to prove that our New Testament has not been altered so as to mislead us. There are a great many very old written copies of different parts of our New Testament yet in the world. Some of them are more than twelve hundred years old, and a great many of them have been compared together."

"And how do they agree, Uncle Philip ?"

"In substance, my children, they all agree. Sometimes a word is not spelled properly, sometimes a short word is left out or put in, sometimes the words are not placed exactly in the same order in the sentence, and sometimes one copy uses one word, and another copy puts another word of the same meaning for it: but in substance, as I said, they all agree ; so that I think we may learn

from the very worst copy what we ought to believe, and what we ought to do."

"Uncle Philip, how did it happen that these little differences were made?"

"Why, my children, you must remember that these writings were copied by men who, of course, might make mistakes. I dare say they tried not to make any, but a man in copying cannot always help it. Other old books which have been copied have mistakes of the same kind in them: and as regards the Scriptures, the only wonder is, not that there should be some mistakes, but that they should be so few as not to alter the sense so much as to hide it from us. So now what do you say, have the Scriptures come down to us correctly as they were at first written?"

"Oh yes, we think they have."

"Very well. When you come again, we will look a little farther into the subject.

"Good-by now."

"Good-by, Uncle Philip."

CONVERSATION VIII.

Uncle Philip tells the Children how to find out when a Witness tells the Truth ; and then they talk about Jack Simpson, who was Tried and Hanged for Killing a Traveller ; and about a man whose name was Ryder ; and about Crazy People.

"WELL, my dear children, I am glad to see you come again, for it leads me to think that you are not tired of talking with me about the truth of Christianity."

"Oh no, Uncle Philip, we are not tired, though what you say sometimes seems hard to understand, till you ask us some questions which make us think ; but when we think, we can see very well what you mean."

"Ah, that is the secret ; learn to think : I ask you the questions because I wish you to think ; and I am afraid of but one thing, that is, that I may not always put my question in such a way as to make you think in the track which I wish. When you do not see, then, what my reason is for asking you a particular

question, the fault is mine, not yours. You can all think well enough, and so can most children if they are only helped into the right way. And remember, no man can be wise who has not learned to think. He may know many things, for he may hear them from others, or read them in books, and he may remember them too ; but if he has never thought for himself about them, his knowledge will do him but little good."

" Well, Uncle Philip, let us now go on, and we will do our best to be attentive, and to think."

" I am willing : but first, suppose we just look back, and see how far we have gone in this business. Let us find out what we are satisfied about, and that will help us perhaps to go a little further."

" Very well, sir."

" Then, in the first place, we showed from a great many old writers that they had from the beginning of the Christian religion a New Testament like ours, and that they always said and believed it was written by the men whom we say wrote it. Is that so ?"

" Yes, sir."

" Then we talked about its having been

altered since it was written, and tried to find out whether it had been altered, and we discovered a great many reasons why it could not have been altered, and so we concluded."

"That it had not been altered; that is 'as plain as a pike-staff,' Uncle Philip."

"Now then let us see what comes next. Here we have what the writers of this New Testament said, and just as they said it. What would you think was the next matter to look into?"

"Why, really, I cannot see, Uncle Philip. I should say there was nothing to do but just to take the book and read it, and try to find out God's will from it, and do it."

"Well, here these men tell us what Christ did, and what he said we ought to do."

"Very well, Uncle Philip, and that is all plain reading enough. I can understand that."

"Now, then, how do you know that these men have told the *truth* about Christ's sayings and doings?"

"Let me see: Uncle Philip, you are right; I think we have not looked at that. A man might sit down and write a book about things which he says he saw, and yet not put

the truth in it. It does not prove that the stories in a book are true, just because they are written and then printed."

"Surely not. If the man who writes the book is a foolish man, he may not have sense enough to find out truth from falsehood; and if he is a bad man, who wishes to mislead others, he will not care whether his book is true or not. So now you see what comes next, do you not?"

"Yes sir; we must now find out whether these men have told the truth: whether they ever saw and heard the things which they say they did."

"Right. Now then for that question."

"But I cannot see, Uncle Philip, how you are going to find that out."

"Well, well; let us go on by degrees, perhaps we shall find a way. Were you ever in the court-house?"

"Yes, Uncle Philip; I was there when Jack Simpson was tried for killing the traveller who stopped at his house."

"Well, let us hear something about the trial if you please."

"Why, Uncle Philip, I saw you there."

"I know it; but no matter for that, just tell these other children what you saw."

"Well, then, the judge sat at one end of the court-room on a high seat, and the lawyers were all sitting at tables inside of a square railing, which they called the bar, I believe; and on one side of the bar was a kind of box, in which the jury afterward sat. Then the judge told them to bring in the prisoner, and Jack Simpson was brought in, and they put him opposite the judge, just on the outside of the railing in which the lawyers were. The clerk of the court then read a long paper to Jack Simpson, and asked him if he was guilty or not guilty: and I remember he said that he was not guilty. And after the judge and the lawyers had talked together for a short time, I heard the judge tell the clerk to go on with the jury; and then they called the names of a great many gentlemen, and as they came up one at a time, the clerk told Jack Simpson to look at each of them, and asked him, 'Do you like that man?' And some he liked, and some he did not: whenever he said he liked one, the clerk made that one swear to try him fairly, I suppose (for I did not exactly understand the words he spoke),

and at last he got twelve. Then the clerk read over to them again the same paper which he had before read to Jack Simpson; and one of the lawyers got up and told the judge and the jury what he could prove, and then they called in the witnesses, and they proved that Jack Simpson killed the man, and the jury said so too ; and Jack Simpson was hanged for it."

"Stop, not so fast, if you please. What was the name of the man dressed in a brown coat, who was a witness ?"

"His name was Ryder."

"Did you ever see him before ?"

"No, Uncle Philip ; nobody about here knew much about him. He does not belong to this part of the country."

"Well, what was his testimony ?"

"He said that he was travelling from the back parts of Vermont, and reached Simpson's house the same night with the traveller who was killed. They talked together till it was bed-time, and then went to bed. Ryder said that he could not sleep ; and about one o'clock he heard some one stepping very softly along the passage by his door, and saw a light shine through the key-hole. Soon after he heard

two or three heavy groans, which seemed to come from the traveller's room, which was next but one to his, and opened on the same passage ; and then all was still again, until he heard some one stepping softly back again by his door. He waited for a while, and then took his pistol and stole softly out of his room and down stairs, when he heard a noise in the kitchen, and found the back door of the house open. He went out and hid himself in the dark shadow, so that he could still see the door. In a little time, he saw a man go in with a bucket of water ; and he then stole softly around the house and got near one of the kitchen windows, which was partly open : he peeped in, and saw Simpson in his shirt sleeves, with blood upon them, washing his hands, while another man was sitting by the fireside, and examining the saddle-bags of the traveller ; and he heard Simpson say to the other man, ' Not more than three times.' He hid himself until it was nearly daylight, and then asked the first man whom he met to show him where a magistrate lived. He showed him, and the magistrate went with a constable and Ryder to Simpson's. Simpson was in bed, and said that he did not know

whether the traveller was up; and when they looked in the traveller's room, they found some spots on the floor, which had just been washed, but he was not there. His horse too was not in the stable; but behind the stable they found a place where the ground looked fresh, and when they dug there they found the poor traveller; and Simpson helped them to dig him out."

"A pretty good account you give. And now what did Simpson's lawyers say to all this?"

"Oh, they said that the other man (who was never seen after that night) had killed the traveller,—buried him, and then taken his horse and saddle-bags and gone off,—that Simpson was a respectable man, and knew nothing about it,—that nobody knew this man Ryder, and that they ought not to believe his story."

"Then the whole point was, whether Ryder told the truth?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, what was done next?"

"Then the lawyers against Simpson called in ten or twelve gentlemen, who said that they lived in Vermont,—that they knew Ryder

from the time he was a boy,—that he was a very pious, and respectable, and sensible man, and that none of his neighbours ever thought or said that he would tell a lie. So the jury believed him, and Simpson was hanged ; and before he was hanged he owned that Ryder told the truth."

" Well, now, I wish to put a few questions to you. The whole matter depended on what kind of man Ryder was, did it not ?"

" Yes, sir."

" If he had been a worthless, bad man, the jury would not have believed him, would they ?"

" No, sir."

" The lawyers against Simpson, then, acted wisely when they called on Ryder's neighbours and acquaintances to show what his character was ?"

" Certainly, Uncle Philip."

" Very good ; we shall have occasion to remember that by-and-by. But at present just take notice, that after the witness, Ryder, had told his story, the next question was, ' shall it be believed,' and they settled that by asking, ' what is his character.'

"Yes, sir; that all seems right and reasonable."

"True. Now when we come to his character, what shall we ask about? A man's character has a great many things in it; he may be a fool or a wise man, an honest man or a rogue, a passionate man or good-tempered, generous or mean, kind-hearted or cruel, and so on. Shall we ask about all these things?"

"They did not ask all these things about Ryder, Uncle Philip."

"No, because they were not necessary. All they wished to know was, if Ryder would tell a lie or the truth. His neighbours said he was a sensible man; and that showed that he could understand what he did see or hear; and they said, too, that he was an honest, pious, good man; and that showed that he would tell truly what he knew. Was any thing else necessary?"

"Not that I can see, Uncle Philip."

"Very good, then; all we wish to know about the character of a witness is, first, whether he has got *sense* enough to know what he does see or hear; and, secondly, whether he is *honest* enough to tell nothing.

about it but what he does know. Do you understand me?"

"Yes, sir; only let him have sense, and be a good man, and you will get the truth out of him."

"Yes: and now here are our witnesses who wrote these books in the New Testament; they are just like witnesses in court: they have told their story, and here it is printed for us. Now all that we wish to know about their characters consists of two things: first, had they sense? and next, had they honesty? Am I right?"

"Yes, sir."

"Now, then, for the sense of these men. I do not believe they were crazy, or wanting in understanding. Nobody ever said or thought that they had not good sense on most subjects: if they were out of their right minds at all, it was on the subject of their religion only."

"Well, Uncle Philip, does not religion sometimes make people crazy?"

"I think not, my children. People sometimes have very wild notions on religious matters, and Christianity gets all the blame for it: but it was not Christianity that made them wild. True Christianity makes men

sober : to be sure, it makes men's feelings to be warm, and this warmth makes men zealous ; but this is not craziness. Men who know nothing about Christianity themselves, I think, are apt to make mistakes in this matter, and to call very pious people crazy, merely because they cannot understand them or feel like them ; but there is no reason in this. However, my children, people may be crazy *about religion*, as well as about any thing else ; though it is not true religion that makes them so ; for if it was, then every man who is truly religious could not help being crazy too."

" Well, Uncle Philip, then these men who wrote the New Testament might have been crazy about their religion."

" Certainly, they *might* have been. I think, though, they were not ; and if not, they certainly were not crazy about any thing else ; and so they were men of good common sense."

" That is all plain ; but, Uncle Philip, will you tell us why you think they were not crazy about their religion ?"

" Yes ; that is what I am now going to do. Every man when he is out of his senses

shows it by what he says or does. — There are marks by which you know a crazy man, are there not?"

"Oh yes, sir ; there is poor old Joseph, who lives down by the mill. He dresses himself up with old ribands and bits of rags, and thinks he is the king of France. He says so; too, and you cannot persuade him that he is mistaken."

"Very true. So, too, when people are crazy on the subject of religion, there are very sure marks by which to tell it : and such unfortunate people are sometimes called enthusiasts and fanatics."

"Uncle Philip, have you ever seen any such people?"

"Oh yes."

"Then you know by what marks to tell them?"

"I think I do, and I will tell them to you : and as we go on we will see whether these New Testament writers show any of these marks."

"Well, Uncle Philip, what is the first mark of these—I have forgotten that hard word by which you called them."

"Enthusiasts, I suppose you mean."

"Yes, yes, Uncle Philip, that is the word. What is the first mark?"

"Why, the first remarkable circumstance is, that such persons are very apt to believe just what they wish to believe about religious matters, no matter how strange it may seem to other people. They think very frequently that God has a great love for them in particular, and teaches to them more than he does to other men. So whatever they fancy to be his teaching to them, they believe to be true, and they tell others that it is certainly so ; and they will stick to it until it is driven out of their heads by some new fancy. Let me show you what I mean. In the year 1657, a tailor, whose name was Lodowick Muggleton, supposed that God had a special love for him, and so he set up for a prophet, and said that he had power to send people to heaven or to hell, as he pleased ; and that God had sent him to be one of the last witnesses who should come before the end of the world. Now this poor man insisted upon it that all these things were so, and he believed them, and no one could convince him that he was wrong. He had no proof to show for any of these things ; but he believed them

because he said he *felt* them: and he never admitted his folly. Now Lodowick Muggleton was an enthusiast, the poor man was certainly crazy, and he had the first mark which I spoke of."

"Well, Uncle Philip, the apostles did not act as Lodowick Muggleton did, I suppose?"

"Certainly not: they believed some things which seemed strange to many, but they always *gave a reason* for it, and they never asked any one else to believe them without telling them *why* they ought to believe. They went upon *proof*. They told what they had *seen*. Besides, Lodowick Muggleton never owned that he might make a mistake and do wrong; but these apostles put down in their books things which they did, and which were wrong; they own it, they do not try to hide it. Lodowick Muggleton was ready, too, to believe any thing which suited him; he was very *quick* in believing: the apostles were sometimes very *slow*. When Christ rose from the dead, and they heard of it, they treated it as an idle story, and 'believed not;' and when some of them saw his grave empty, they 'wondered at what had happened,' but did not believe; and one of them never would

believe until he saw Christ himself, and was told to put his fingers in the print of the nails in Christ's hands. So you see they were not willing to believe any thing about their religion without having proof for it."

"Well, Uncle Philip, the story about Lodowick Muggleton makes all this plain enough. Now, what is the second mark that a man is an enthusiast?"

"Why, the second mark is this: such a man is apt to be warm-tempered, to have very quick feelings, and he cannot bear to have his opinions contradicted. I will tell you now of some things which show all this. Somewhere about the year 1522, there was a baker, named Storck, in a small town in Germany, who chose twelve other bakers, and called them apostles. Some others, as crazy as himself, joined him, and particularly a man named Thomas Munzer, who went about preaching that God had told them in their dreams what to do; and some of the things were strange enough,—there were to be no laws, and nobody was to have any property of his own. The clergyman of the place, who was a pious and sensible man, talked with them, and did what he could to stop them,

but they lost their temper, and got into such a furious passion that finally they stirred up a war, in which one hundred and thirty thousand people were killed ; and they were obliged to behead this man Munzer.

" Now, there is nothing like this in the apostles. They do not get into a passion in their writings. They do not abuse other people for their religion, they do not boldly say that they have had conversations with the great God, there is nothing of fury about them ; but they seem to be plain, modest, sober-minded men.

" Now I will give you another mark. Do you know what melancholy means ?"

" Yes, sir ; it means sadness and sorrow. When a man hangs down his head, and appears to be very sad about something, and says but little, and tries to keep away from the company of other people, he is called a melancholy man."

" Yes ; and the opinions of such a man, when he does speak, are found to be very strict, and his religion seems to be a very stern and unpleasant sort of thing, which gives him no comfort. Now this kind of severe sternness is a very common mark of enthusiasm."

"Well, the apostles had not this, had they, Uncle Philip?"

"Not at all, if we may judge from what we know of them. They did not try to get away and hide themselves from their fellow-men, but they mixed very freely with the people of their country, and talked with them; some of them, we know, had intimate friends, they were men, I should say, of cheerful tempers, and fond of being with each other, and with their fellow-men.

"Now for another mark. An enthusiast is always full of self-conceit. He thinks a great deal of himself; and if you wish to please him, you must tell him that you think he is a man of great consequence. But the apostles showed no self-conceit, I think. They never praise themselves in what they have written; whenever they mention themselves, it is commonly to tell of something they said or did which was wrong. They never show in what they have written that they had a very low and contemptuous opinion of other people. What they have written seems, I think, to be just what would have been written by very humble men, who did not think too much of themselves."

"Well, Uncle Philip, are there any more marks?"

"Yes; but I am afraid that you are weary, so we will let them alone until you come again."

CONVERSATION IX.

Uncle Philip talks with the Children about more Marks by which to tell when a Man is out of his right Mind, and therefore not fit to be a Witness.

"WELL, Uncle Philip, if you please, we are ready to hear what you promised to tell us about men's showing that they are enthusiasts."

"Very good; I am ready also. The last mark I mentioned was self-conceit, I believe. The next is this, that a man whose mind is wild on the subject of religion is not apt to stick to one set of opinions long. He will be very obstinate to-day in one set of notions, and

to-morrow he will be just as obstinate for another set, as different as is possible. He goes by his feelings, not by proof; so that you never can tell what he thinks or what he will say about it."

"This is not the way of the apostles, Uncle Philip."

"No, truly; very far from it. The whole of the New Testament is of one sort only: all through it teaches the same things. Now if *one* man had written it all, such an agreement in all its parts would show that he was a man who held fast to but one set of opinions, that he was a thinking man who went upon proofs, and that he was no enthusiast, would it not?"

"Certainly, sir, it would."

"Very well; if one man, who was an enthusiast could not and would not agree with himself, and say the same thing all through his book, how could several different men, who were enthusiasts or crazy, do it?"

"Uncle Philip, if you please, just make that a little plainer for us."

"I will try to do so, my children. If *one* man who was crazy had written our New

Testament, do you think it would all have agreed together?"

"No, sir; one part would not have taught the same things which another did."

"Very well. Now if but *one* man, whose mind was wrong, could not have made it agree, do you think that a dozen crazy men, writing, some at one time and some at another, would have agreed each with himself, and with all the rest of the dozen too?"

"I see it, I see it, Uncle Philip. The New Testament agrees with itself, and it was written by many different persons. Now if *one* enthusiast could not make it all alike, a great many different ones would find it harder still."

"Now you have it. I conclude, therefore, that as the book does agree with itself, the men who wrote it could not have been enthusiasts."

"And that seems reasonable, Uncle Philip. Are there any more marks?"

"Yes; there is one remarkable thing about a man whose mind is disordered on the subject of religion, which I never yet knew to be wanting."

"What is that, Uncle Philip?"

"I never yet knew such a man who was willing to take the whole Bible just as it stands."

"Why, did he not believe it, Uncle Philip?"

"Oh, if you asked him that question, he was sure to answer, Yes: but yet he treated a large part of it as if it were not true. Whatever passages in it seemed to suit his feelings, and agree with them, he was ready enough to repeat and believe; but he gave no attention or respect to any which you might remember and repeat, if they seemed to contradict his notions. Now there was no such conduct as this in the apostles. One of the writers of the New Testament does not despise what the others have written. Sometimes one tells us what another has said. They were always willing to take as true the whole of what God had said in his Word. They would read the Prophets to find out whether they contradict what was told to them. They told the people to read the Scriptures, and never told them to think more of one part than another, but to believe *all*.

"And now, there is one thing more which I think shows that these men had their senses

well enough. They were plain men, they had but little learning: now when such men run wild about religion, we know very well what they say and do. They tell us of their strange dreams, and of their hearing voices, and talking with God, and a great many such things: and they tell us too that God has said to them things, some of which, we think, are very foolish, and some very wicked. Do you remember what I said of Lodowick Muggleton, and Storck, and their strange opinions?"

"Oh yes, sir."

"Well, there is proof of what I say. These men were *ignorant enthusiasts*; one was a tailor, and the other was a baker, and neither of them had been educated. Now the writers of the New Testament were plain, uneducated men, too; they were ignorant, therefore, but they were not enthusiasts; for if they had been, they would have told the world just such stories as Muggleton and Storck did. But when you read their stories there is no such wild, strange thing in them. You see at once that whoever wrote them had common sense."

"Well, Uncle Philip, there is something I

have just thought of, and I wish to ask you about it, for it puzzles me."

"Let us have it then, my lad."

"Why, you said these men who wrote the New Testament had no learning; and I wish to know, then, if they were fit to write books."

"I did not mean that they had never been taught how to write: but they had very little learning from books, and they did not need much to write the gospels. I can make that plain to you directly. Come here, little Dick Green. How far have you got on in your spelling-book?"

"Oh, I can spell a word of three syllables, Uncle Philip."

"I am glad to hear it. Can you read at all?"

"Oh yes, sir, in little short words."

"Very well. Were you at the river on that cold Saturday, last winter, when the boys were skating?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you see any thing there, on that day, which you remember now?"

"Oh yes, sir; for I saw poor Charles Markham break through the ice, and I saw your

gardener fix a board to stand on, and get him out; and when he was got out, I heard you tell some of the men to take him into old Mrs. Truelove's house; and poor Charles was almost frozen: but at last he got warm and comfortable; and you went to his mother's to tell her about it, and brought back some dry clothes for him, and then took him home."

"Boys, is all this true?"

"Oh yes, Uncle Philip; every word of it."

"Dick, could you spell in three syllables then?"

"No, sir."

"Boys, is it not very strange that Dick should tell us so correct a story, when he had not even learning enough to spell?"

"Why, no, sir. What has his spelling to do with his telling us a plain story of what he *saw*?"

"Just nothing, I think. And if he knew how to write, I suppose he could put down on paper exactly what he has been telling us."

"Certainly, sir."

"Then I do not see that much learning is necessary to tell a plain *fact*. If a man saw,

or heard, or felt, or tasted, or smelled, I should suppose he might tell of it without any great share of learning."

"To be sure he could, sir."

"Well, if you will just turn to the gospels, you will find that they contain nothing else but *facts*. The men who wrote merely put down what they saw or heard ; and I suppose learning does not make a man's eyes any better, or open his ears. Uneducated people can see and hear, I hope, and can tell *whether* they do see and hear, and *what* they do see and hear."

"Ah, Uncle Philip, it is all plain now."

"Very good, then : we have seen that these men had none of the marks which would show them to have been crazy about their religion : they had common sense enough to understand very well what they saw, and learning enough to write it down for other people. But I think there is more proof still, about this matter."

"What is it, Uncle Philip ?"

"Listen, and you shall hear. We know what men who are enthusiasts or crazy about religion can do ; and we know, too, what

they cannot do ; for the history of such people has told us."

" What can they do, Uncle Philip ?"

" Why, they can sometimes get a great many people to agree with them in some of their strange opinions, as Lodowick Muggleton did ; but they never can persuade everybody in the country, the whole of the people, to believe that a downright lie is the truth, and that they know it to be the truth, when in fact they know nothing at all about it."

" How is that, Uncle Philip ? Will you please just to tell us that over in another way."

" Yes, very willingly. Suppose a set of men, professing to be very religious, should rise up among us in this country, and should say that something had happened before our eyes in these United States, and that we all knew it had happened ; and suppose that thing never had happened : do you think that they could make us all believe that it had happened, and that we knew it ?"

" No, sir, never."

" Very well. Now here was a being named Jesus who was *nailed to a cross*, and *died* there ; and when he died, there was *darkness*

over all the land ; and at the very same moment there was an *earthquake*. At least, these apostles said that all these things happened, and the whole nation, they said, knew that they had happened. Now would it not be strange, if such things never took place at all, that the apostles should yet be able to make the whole Jewish people believe that they had taken place ?”

“ It would, indeed, Uncle Philip.”

“ But would it not be more strange still, if they were able to persuade these very people that *they knew* these things to have happened, when all the while they knew nothing at all about them ?”

“ Yes, truly, it would be the strangest thing in the world.”

“ And yet the Jewish people did believe that these things happened : they did admit that they knew them to be true. The enthusiasm of these apostles could no more have persuaded them of these things if they were all lies, than I can persuade a blind man that he sees as plainly as one who is not blind. So that for my part, children, I am perfectly satisfied that these apostles, who are our witnesses, had *one* of the things which the court,

in Jack Simpson's trial, wished to find out about Ryder : the court desired to know, first, whether Ryder had *sense* enough to know what he saw. I think our witnesses had *sense*. When you come again we will inquire whether they had *honesty*, for that is the next thing."

CONVERSATION X.

Uncle Philip shows the Children that the Witnesses who tell about Jesus Christ were honest Men, who would not say any thing that was not true.

"WELL, my children, are you ready to go on and learn something more about these witnesses?"

"Oh yes, sir ; and I will tell you what I have been thinking."

"What is it?"

"We are just like a court, I think. Here are witnesses who have told us something,

and they are like Ryder, and we are finding out the truth of what they say ; and so we are the jury, and, Uncle Philip, you are the judge."

"No, no ; Uncle Philip is the lawyer, explaining to the jury why the witness ought to be believed."

"Ha, ha, my lads, so you have made a court-house of Uncle Philip's study : but let us go on. Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, please to be seated, and we will proceed with the trial. We have shown that our witnesses had common sense ; and now we are to find out whether they had common honesty : in other words, whether they would tell us *truly* what they knew."

"And how are you going to find that out, Uncle Philip?"

"I think we shall have but little difficulty. Let us proceed by one step at a time, and we shall reach the end at last. When we were talking of Simpson's trial, I believe we agreed that it was wise in the lawyers to call on Ryder's friends and acquaintances to find out his true character."

"Yes, sir, we did."

"I told you then to remember it, as we

should have occasion for it before we were done ; and now is the time to use it. Here are our witnesses ; now for their characters : let the men who lived when they did, and knew all about them, come forward and tell us that they were so wicked as not to be believed."

" Well, Uncle Philip, do any of the men who knew them say that they were liars ?"

" No, my children, not one of them says so."

" But, Uncle Philip, perhaps they were partial to them, and so would not tell."

" Partial to them ! Why *everybody* was not on their side. These apostles had enemies, very bitter enemies ; so bitter that they often dragged them before the courts to be punished ; and they hated them so much that they killed more than one of them. Is it not strange, that when they were dragging them into court, they never should have said any thing against them to show that their characters were so bad that they ought not to be believed ?"

" Yes, Uncle Philip, that is strange ; for if they could have said that, and said it truly, it would have been the shortest way of stopping

these witnesses in their story. It would have saved them a deal of trouble."

"Certainly it would : but whether it stopped them or not, we should certainly have heard something about their bad characters from their enemies, who lived when they did, and had a chance to find out all about them. Now we do not hear from them a word about it. The Jews complained of them because they told the people that Jesus had risen from the dead ; and the heathen complained because they told the people not to worship idols : but this was all they could say against them ; and this does not prove that they were liars. I think, then, that the neighbours and acquaintances of these men, who knew them from the time they were boys, knew nothing against their characters, or we should have heard of it."

"Well, that seems reasonable, Uncle Philip."

"Let us look at it now, children, in another way. Do you not remember that when some of you were walking with me last summer, near the public school-house, we met a man with but one arm ?"

"Yes, sir ; and he asked you to give him money, and told you a long story about his

arm having been shot off in the last war, in a battle which one of our ships had: he did not tell you the truth, however; for you afterward met a gentleman who knew the man, and he said that his story was untrue."

"Very good. And for what do you suppose the man told me a falsehood?"

"Because he thought you would believe him, and be sorry for him, and give him something."

"Then his wish was to gain something. He had a reason for what he did. Now if he had known that nothing was to be gained, would he have told the falsehood?"

"I should think not, sir."

"Well, then, it seems that a man does not commonly tell an untruth, without hoping to gain something by it. Now suppose we inquire what these witnesses of ours were likely to gain by telling all these falsehoods, if they are falsehoods."

"Why, I should think they would gain nothing; for you told us that the poor Christians were persecuted at first. They would lose instead of gain."

"That is precisely what I think myself. They might be crucified, and burnt, and

stoned, and sawed in two, and killed with clubs ; or if they were left to live, they might be poor and despised : but I should suppose these were things which men would hardly tell a falsehood to get."

"No, sir : they would be much more likely, if they were wicked men, to tell an untruth to keep clear of them."

"Certainly they would. I really cannot see what these men were to gain. It could not have been *money*, for there is not a single word in their story about giving them money. It was not *wicked pleasures*, for they preached against sinful pleasure. They did not wish the world to think that they were very *great men* ; for though they knew more than the people, they did not take airs on themselves, and pretend that they were very great. I do not think they wished for *power*, for they never tried to get it from the people ; but they often made the people angry with them, by telling them plainly of their sins. And when some of the people thought and said that they were *gods*, they told them that they were not. So that it seems they did not wish for money, nor to be thought great men, nor to have power, nor to be made gods by the

people. Then tell me, my children, what were they to gain by telling a lie?"

"Why, Uncle Philip, nothing, that we can see."

"Now let us go a little further. When a man tells something which is not true, he is apt to be so cunning as not to give people any thing in his story by which to find him out. Is it not so?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, then, such a man does not bring into his story any thing but what he thinks is necessary. He makes his lie just as short as he can; for if he brings in a great many things, some of them may not agree with his story, and so he will be caught. Let us see now how our witnesses have done. They bring in a great many things; for instance, they say, 'We did some very wonderful actions, and you know we did, for you saw it.' Now what fools they must have been to put such a thing in a lie, when the very men to whom they told it would only have to say, 'It is not true, for we never saw you do the things which you mention.' Then, again, we find them, in their story, putting in something else which was not necessary to make up a good

story. They tell certain men, for instance, 'We gave you power to do very wonderful works:' and then we find them blaming these very same men for not using that power as they ought to do. Now just think of this one moment. Suppose these men never had any such power given to them; would they not have said so?"

"To be sure they would, sir."

"And yet, my children, they never did say so. - The very boldness, then, with which our witnesses put such things into their stories, *when there was no need of putting them in*, convinces me that they were honest men, not afraid of being caught in a lie, in what they said."

"Now I will give you another reason for thinking that they were honest men."

"What is it, Uncle Philip?"

"Some of them were put to death, because they would not deny what they had said about Christ. Now, my children, I do not believe there ever was a man who would go and die a cruel death, rather than deny something which all the time he *knew* was a lie. Suppose we thought something which we had said to be *true*, and men were going to burn

us unless we would say that it was not true ; how do you think we should act ?”

“ Why, Uncle Philip, I am afraid it would be a very hard matter to stick to the truth and be burnt for it.”

“ So I think : but suppose we knew very well that the thing which they wished us to deny was a downright lie ; what should we do then ?”

“ I should say it was a lie, Uncle Philip, and so save myself.”

“ Yes, and so would I, or any other man ; especially if the falsehood were such a one that by sticking to it I could gain nothing. Now, then, can you think of any thing which would make you willing to be burnt, sooner than contradict what you had said ?”

“ Nothing, Uncle Philip, but my believing in my heart that it was true, and that God meant that I should stick to it, and would take care of my soul even if they did burn me.”

“ Very well : then when these witnesses of ours were burnt, what do you suppose enabled them to stick to what they had said ?”

"Why, the same things which I have just mentioned."

"Certainly: and if they had these things, then were they not *honest* men?"

"Yes, sir: but there is one thing,—might they not have been under a *mistake*?"

"What if they were; that has nothing to do with their honesty. Did you never really and truly believe something to be as you said it was; and then afterward, did you never find out that you were wrong?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, were you not perfectly honest in believing that the thing was as you said, until you found out better? Did you mean to tell a falsehood about it?"

"I see now, Uncle Philip, that it makes no difference; they might have been just as honest, even if they were under a mistake."

"Yes; and their honesty is all that we wish to get at now. But as you mentioned their being mistaken, I will say a word, my children, about that. I do not think that they were or could be mistaken in what they said; and for saying which they were burnt."

"Why not, Uncle Philip?"

"Was Dick Green mistaken in what happened at the river to Charles Markham?"

"No, sir."

"And why not, pray?"

"Because, it was something which any one who has eyes might have *seen*; and little Dick has eyes, and good ones too."

"You mean, then, that it was a fact: and that men are not so apt to be mistaken about facts when they have a good chance to find them out. Is that it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, pray, were not our witnesses put to death for this very thing: for saying that they saw a great many facts?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, as they saw them again and again, at many different times, and in many different places, they certainly had a good opportunity to find out whether they were mistaken in *all* of them. Besides that, if one was mistaken as to what he saw, there were several others to set him right: and when they talked together, if they found that the fact appeared in the same way to all of them, how could they be mistaken?"

"Why, truly, it does not seem likely that they should all be wrong."

"No, indeed: and therefore, my children, when these men died for saying that certain things did happen which they saw, it proves, not only that they were honest men, and believed what they said; but it proves, also, that the things did actually happen as they related them. Are you fatigued? If you are, I will stop; but if not, I have a little more to say about the honesty and truth of our witnesses."

"Oh, go on, go on, Uncle Philip."

"Let me have your attention, then, or you will not understand me. I think these witnesses of ours were honest, because there are some things told by them, about Christ, which they never could have written if they had not been true."

"What are they, Uncle Philip?"

"I will tell you. When we take up the gospels and read about Christ, we do not find that the men who wrote those gospels ever try to tell us what kind of character Christ had. They do not say that he was generous, or compassionate, or pious; but they tell us stories about him which show us what sort

of a being he was, without their saying any thing about it particularly. Let me show you what I mean. When we read the story of Lazarus, who was dead, and his two sisters ; the story does not say that Jesus was a man who felt very sorry for everybody who was distressed ; and that he rejoiced to go and help people out of their troubles, and that he had power to bring the dead back again to life, and determined to exert it for these poor sisters : no such thing : but it just lets us know what he did, and leaves us to find out for ourselves by putting a great many of his actions together in our minds, what sort of a being he was. And when, in this way, we get together in our thoughts a great many things which he did, we find out that his character was *perfect* ; we never find him doing any thing which we are willing to say was wrong. He had fortitude, and calmness, and kindness, and dignity, and wisdom, and every thing else that is good ; and we see that he had all this, and yet these writers never have told us all this in so many words. Now I will tell you what I think this proves to us."

"What is it, Uncle Philip?"

" Why, if these men who wrote these books had determined to describe in writing the character of a perfect being, they could not have done it, if their souls had depended on it. Very wise and learned men have tried to do this very thing, and they were not able; and these apostles were not learned men; and yet, by simply telling us what Jesus did, these unlearned men have really described a perfect character. Now, how did they manage to do it? They did it without intending it, simply by telling the truth: for if they had made up all these stories, just to give Christ a good character, they would have missed it. Nothing in the world is harder for learned and wise men, than to describe a man by his actions alone, and always to make him act just as such a man ought to act. Sometimes he will be inconsistent. And, to tell you the truth, I do not believe that these writers of the gospels knew themselves what a perfect character they had made for Christ. Now, then, just see where we are brought. There are two things here, one of which must be true."

" What are the two things, Uncle Philip?"

" Why, either these *actions* which these men say Christ did were *truly* done by him;

or, these *unlearned* men have done what the learned never could do: they have *invented* a set of stories which exhibit a perfect being, when they did not themselves know that they were doing it. Now which of these two things do you think is true?"

"Why, Uncle Philip, it is plain enough *they* never could have made all these stories, if *learned* men could not."

"Very well: then it must be true that Christ really did what they say he did; and if so, they are honest men.

"Now, my dear children, one thing more, and we will stop. You have seen a baptism, I suppose?"

"Oh yes, sir, often."

"Who do Christians say commanded baptism to be administered?"

"Why, the Saviour himself, sir."

"You have seen the Lord's Supper administered, too, have you not?"

"Yes, sir."

"Who commanded that?"

"The Saviour, sir."

"Very well. The people in this and all Christian countries keep the first day of the week (Sunday) holy, I believe."

"Yes, sir."

"Very good. Now, here are three *facts*,— baptism, the Lord's Supper, and keeping Sunday holy. All these facts mean something: all Christians, from the very beginning, have supposed that they did mean something; and they were always a part of their religion which they did not dare neglect, and here we have these facts among us at this day. They have been kept, then, among Christians for hundreds of years, and Christians have always believed, too, that they had something to do in the way of reminding them of this Jesus Christ, and of what he did and said. Now, will you just tell me, if Jesus Christ never lived, nor died, nor rose again, nor taught men, nor wrought miracles: if it is all a wicked falsehood, how on earth did these strange practices of baptism, and the Lord's Supper, and Sunday keeping, get footing in the world, and keep it so as to be in *common use* for eighteen hundred years?"

"I cannot tell, Uncle Philip."

"No, my dear child, nor can any one else: for he must be a strange man who can believe that so many people, in so many different countries, wide apart from each other, should

all have agreed together to keep up such a parcel of unmeaning ceremonies, and should have been able to make all the rest of the world think that they were important, when, in fact, Christianity was all a great falsehood. What do you say?"

"Oh no, Uncle Philip, it is no falsehood."

"Very well, then our witnesses were honest men. Good-by."

CONVERSATION XI.

Uncle Philip talks to the Children about Miracles, and tells them what a Miracle is; and he relates a Story about a Man who did not know what Ice was: and says something about a Man named Lazarus, who was brought back to Life after he was dead.

"WELL, my dear children, are you all here?"

"Yes, sir."

"Sit down, then, and we will go to business.

Suppose we just look back and see what we have found out. What say you?"

"If you please, Uncle Philip, we will thank you to do so. Then we shall know exactly where we are."

"Very well, then. We have found out these things, I think:—

"I. That about eighteen hundred years ago, the people had a New Testament like ours, for they copied out of it.

"II. That these old people said this New Testament was written by the same persons whom we think wrote it.

"III. That the Testament which those old persons had could not have been altered without its being found out; so that it has come down to us substantially correct.

"IV. That the men who wrote this New Testament were not crazy about religion, but had good common sense.

"V. That they not only had sense, but were good honest men, who would not tell a lie."

"Yes, Uncle Philip, I remember we have found out all these things."

"Very good. Now, then, we will just look into this New Testament to see the things

which these men have written there. In all I have been saying to you up to this time, I have never gone to the New Testament, except to show you merely what *words* were written there. I have never talked to you as if those words were certainly true, because I had not *proved* that they were true. But now I have proved it; so we have a right now to believe the stories which are told there. Do you understand me?"

"Oh, yes, sir; when Mary read out of the Scriptures, it was just to show us that the words which she read were the same as the words in your old books; and whether they were true or not made no difference then: you did not tell us that they were true, but merely that they were the same."

"Exactly so; but now I have shown you that my witnesses were men of sense and honesty; so now we will take their story as true. When, then, I open this New Testament, my children, I read there that Christ did some very wonderful things."

"Yes, Uncle Philip, and I know what they are called."

"What?"

"They are called miracles, sir."

"Yes ; and a miracle must be done by the power of a being who is greater than a man is : a man cannot work a miracle by his own power. Now these witnesses of ours tell us that Christ did perform miracles, and you know we have already found out that they were sensible, honest men, who tell the truth."

"Yes, sir."

"Then this is a *fact*, the things were done. Now I ask you, why do you suppose such wonderful works were performed?"

"Why, Uncle Philip, I do not know, unless it was to show that Christ, who did them, had more power than any man had."

"Precisely the true reason. But why should he show that he had more power?"

"I suppose it was to show that God had something to do with the business."

"Very good : but why show that God had something to do with it?"

"Why, Uncle Philip, if God did really do these wonderful things, or help any one to do them ; then it will prove that God was on the side of the miracles."

"Well, now, if what Christ told the world was not true, would he have been able to work any miracles?"

"No, sir; for God would never work a miracle to make the world believe something that was not true."

"Then you think that these miracles show that what Christ said was the truth, and that he proved it was the truth by the miracles?"

"Yes, sir."

"But we know that the witnesses who tell us what Christ said were honest men, and tell us the truth; and if Christ did work miracles, will it not prove that what they tell us is the truth of God?"

"Yes, sir, it will."

"Very well, then; if these men tell us the truth of God, and if they, too, work miracles to prove it, as they did, they must have learned it from God himself: He must have put it into their minds. They could not have received it from a man, for man did not know it: and if they learned it from God, my children, then our witnesses were *inspired*."

"What do you mean by inspired, Uncle Philip?"

"I mean, that God put it into their minds and thoughts what to write."

"Then, Uncle Philip, when we read the New Testament, it is the same thing as if we

hear God speaking the words to us, to teach us our duty."

"I think so. And it all depends on two things. The first is, that here are miracles; and the next is, that God would never let a miracle be worked except to prove the *truth*."

"I believe I understand you, Uncle Philip; though I have to think harder here than I have had to before."

"Well, well: hard thinking will not hurt you. But let us go on; you will find out what I mean before we have done talking about miracles. Suppose you should be in a room where there was somebody lying dead, and a man should come in and touch the dead person, and he should immediately get up alive, and walk about, you would know that you could not do what the man did, would you not?"

"Certainly, sir, that would be a miracle."

"Very good: now suppose, again, that before the man did it, he should say to you, 'I have something to say to you, which God told me to say;' what would you think?"

"Why, I should not know whether God had told him or not; and I should say so to him."

"And you would say right enough: but suppose, again, he should say, 'I will prove that God did tell me, for I will do something which no man can do, unless he has God's power to help him; I will bring a dead man back to life;' what would you think then?"

"I should think that if he did raise the dead man to life God had helped him."

"Now, would God help him to prove a lie?"

"I see it now, Uncle Philip: if he raised the dead man, just to prove that God had sent him to tell me something; and if he told me that this was what he did it for, and that God gave him all the power he had; I should know that God did send him; and so I would believe what he told me."

"Now you have it: so now you see how much proof there is in a miracle, I hope."

"Yes, sir, I do. It is certain proof."

"Yes, indeed, the most certain of all proof; and that is the very reason why some men, who do not love the New Testament, have said that a miracle never could be proved."

"And why not, Uncle Philip? I am sure that if I should see you raise up a dead man,

I could tell of that as well as of any thing else."

"To be sure you could : but I will tell you what these men say about it. They say that if I should come and tell them a wonderful story about a dead man being brought back to life, it would be nothing but *my experience* of what I had seen ; and as *they* never had any such experience, that therefore their experience would kill mine : they would just put theirs against mine, so that what I told them would prove nothing."

"Why, Uncle Philip, that seems foolish enough ; for it is just the same thing as saying they would not believe you, because they did not see it themselves."

"Precisely the same thing ; and it is foolish enough. Why everybody believes ten thousand things *which he never saw himself*. Were you ever in England?"

"No, sir."

"Well, do you think or believe that there is no such place as England, because you never saw it?"

"Why, we are sure there is such a place, for you have told us about it, and we believe

you just as much as if we had been there ourselves."

"I know it; and you act wisely, too. I will tell you a story. Many years ago, a gentleman was sent from this very place (England) as an ambassador to a king who lived somewhere in the East."

"Stop, Uncle Philip; what is an ambassador?"

"An ambassador is a person who is sent by one king or nation to another king or nation, to carry some message from one to the other, or to do some business for the king or people who sent him."

"Go on, Uncle Philip, I understand it now."

"Well, then, the country of this Eastern king was so warm that water never froze there. One day, when he was talking with the ambassador about England, the ambassador happened to tell him that sometimes, in his country, water became so hard that people walked on it. The king, who never had seen ice in his life, laughed at the story, and never would believe one word of it; for, said he, all my experience is the other way. When the ambassador went back to England, and

told the people there this story, everybody laughed at the Eastern king, for they knew very well that there was such a thing as ice, though the king had never seen it."

"Yes, and that story shows how foolish it is not to believe a thing unless you can see it for yourself."

"So it does. But now let us go on. There are a great many miracles spoken of in the New Testament. There are about forty which the book says Christ performed. Now we cannot speak of them all; it would take too much time. So let us just take the story of one, and talk about that: let us see whether, as these witnesses tell the story, it is not plain that there was a real miracle."

"Well, Uncle Philip, that will be a very good way; for if Christ did one, it is plain that he could do more."

"So I think. One is as good for proof as a hundred would be. Now which shall I take?"

"Take one about raising a dead person to life, for we have been talking about that already, you know."

"Very good. Then I shall take the miracle of Christ's raising Lazarus from the dead. I

think that when we get the story from our witnesses, we shall see that there could be no mistake in the matter. I shall take it as St. John tells it. 'This Lazarus, then, it seems, lived with his two sisters, in a little village named Bethany, about two miles from the city of Jerusalem. Christ, with his disciples, was in another part of the country ; he was in Galilee, beyond the river Jordan, a place which was at some distance from Jerusalem. While he was there he received a message from the sisters of Lazarus, sent to let him know that their brother was sick. He remained where he was *two whole days* after he received this message ; and then he told his disciples that Lazarus was dead. He sets out for Bethany ; and when he gets there, he finds, not only that he is dead, but that he has been buried *four days* : when he gets to the house of Lazarus, he finds there a large number of Jews who have gone in to comfort these poor sisters. Now let us stop here for a few moments : I wish to show you that in this business there was no trick. Did Christ tell his disciples that Lazarus was *dead* ?'

"Yes, sir."

"And did the Jews who were comforting these sisters love Christ?"

"No, sir."

"Very well, then. If, instead of really raising Lazarus, he meant by a trick to make them believe that he did it, let us see what he has done: he has caught himself; for, in the first place, he told his own followers that the man really was dead; and there they are to see all that he does; now if he does not *truly* bring him back to life when he tries to do it, *his followers* will not believe him any more, and so he will lose them. Am I right?"

"Yes, sir."

"And he has put it out of his power to deceive them by any trick, for here he has waited several days, and then brought them to the very place where many of his enemies are assembled, watching him narrowly, and ready enough to find out the trick, if there should be one. Am I right, again?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well, then; it is my opinion, that if he had any trick in the matter, he has put them in the way of finding it out. Now let us go on. As if these Jews were not likely to watch him closely enough, he actually

draws their notice by his conduct. He is very sorry, and weeps, and the Jews begin to whisper to one another that he has not any power, for that if he had he would not have let Lazarus die. So now they are ready to watch him more closely still. Now we come to another thing: Lazarus was *really dead*, for when they all came to the grave, the sisters said that his body must be decaying, and that it would be offensive to smell. So that they all agreed he was dead. But, as if there were not enough already to make them watch him closely, he tells them to take the stone off from the grave. Now just think, my children, of all these things. Here they were, all standing around the grave, waiting to see what was to be done. Some were friends, and some were enemies; and here was the very being of whom these very Jews had heard so much, about to do one of his wonderful works before their own eyes; so that now they had a chance to see for themselves. Now tell me, do you believe that all these people gave no attention to what was going on before them?"

"Ah, Uncle Philip, I know that if I had been there, I should have watched with all the eyes I had."

"Yes, and so did they. But let us go on with the story. After the stone was taken away, he says, 'Lazarus, come forth!' and St. John says, 'He that was dead came forth.' Now what trick could there be here? He never used his *hands* at all: he did nothing but speak."

"Uncle Philip, if the story is truly told, there was no trick in it."

"Well, we have already found out that it is truly told: but there is more proof still. To give these very Jews, who were the neighbours of Lazarus, a full opportunity to judge for themselves whether Lazarus was really alive, he lets them with their own hands take off his grave-clothes. Now just suppose that some one whom you knew very well should die, and you should look upon his corpse, and then go to his funeral, and see him put into the grave; and suppose you had gone back to the house, and seen all his brothers and sisters weeping, and should have tried to comfort them: and then suppose, again, that you had gone four days afterward and stood by his grave, and when he was called, should have seen your friend, whom you had always known, come forth, and should have helped

with your own hands to take off his grave-clothes: tell me, do you think that all this could have been a trick, and that you were mistaken in all these things?"

"Never, Uncle Philip, never."

"Well, if to your own opinion about this thing, everybody else who was at that grave with you added theirs, and thought just as you did, would you have any doubts?"

"No, sir."

"And if other people who were not at the grave with you, and who did not like to believe such a strange thing, should know your friend, and when they saw him alive again should give up, and think that you were right, would you not think yourself to be crazy if you doubted?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, we have not done yet. None of the people who lived at the same time with Lazarus ever pretended to deny that he was raised from the dead. St. John tells us that many of the Jews who were at the grave, when they saw this wonderful thing which Christ did, 'believed on him.' "

"And who could help it, Uncle Philip?"

"Some did help it. The rest of the Jews

went and ‘told the chief-priests and Pharisees what they had seen ;’ but not one told them that it was all a lie. These chief-priests and Pharisees would have contradicted it if they could, but they did not dare do it ; too many people had seen it. They were very angry ; but they did not dare have this thing examined closely : they were afraid it would only be proved more and more plainly still. The people in the large city of Jerusalem had heard of this wonderful thing, and they were talking about it : and the chief-priests were so angry that they determined, if they could, to kill Jesus for this thing. St. John tells us that they said, ‘*What do we, for this man doth many miracles : if we let him alone, all men will believe on him.*’ Is not the proof pretty strong ?”

“Oh yes, sir, very strong.”

“Well, there is more yet, my dear children. Everybody who heard the story would, you know, wish to see this Lazarus who had been brought to life. Now hear what the story says about that : ‘Much people of the Jews knew that he (Jesus) was at Bethany, and they came from Jerusalem thither, not for Jesus’ sake only, but *that they might see*

Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. But the chief-priests consulted, that they might put *Lazarus* to death, because that *by reason of him* many of the Jews went away and believed on Jesus.' Now, my dear children, had not these people a good opportunity of inquiring all about it?"

"Yes, sir."

"And would they believe such a strange thing, if it were not true, when by believing it they knew that they would make the chief-priests angry with them?"

"I think not, Uncle Philip."

"More still. These Jews who were at the grave told the people in the city, and when Christ entered Jerusalem, this is what St. John tells us happened:—'The people therefore that were with him, when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, *bare record*. For this cause, the people met him, for that they heard he had done this miracle. The Pharisees, therefore, said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? *the world has gone after him.*'"

"Then, Uncle Philip, it seems as if all the

people in Jerusalem believed that he had raised Lazarus."

"Yes: and do you suppose that if the chief-priests had possessed the smallest opportunity of raising a suspicion that it was all a trick, they would not have done it?"

"Done it! certainly they would."

"So I think; and we should have had their story here, just as we have it related in the history of Christ's resurrection, where they tried to prove it was all a trick. So now, what say you to this story of raising Lazarus?"

"Why, that there was no trick about it."

"Very well, then it was *true*. If true, it was *miraculous*. If miraculous, then *God sent our Saviour*. If God sent him, then what he told his disciples *was from God*. If it was from God, then what they wrote is *the Word of God*. If the New Testament be the Word of God, then it is all true; and there is the rule which God has given us to walk by. Good-by, my dear children: we will have one talk more when you come again."

"Good-by, Uncle Philip."

CONVERSATION XII.

Uncle Philip talks with the Children about Prophets and Prophecies, which the Jews had about Christ many hundred years before he came. He tells them some very strange things about the City of Jerusalem, and teaches them a short Prayer; after which they get a Cake and go home.

“WELL, my dear children, I am happy to see you all here. I have been fearful, more than once, that you would become weary of our conversations on the truth of Christianity. I know that they compel you to think; and perhaps you would like stories of animals, or of my travels, or of our own country better. After to-day, then, we will take up some of these subjects. We have come now to our last conversation about the Christian religion, and the subject is so important that I hope you will endeavour to remember all that I have said.”

"We will, Uncle Philip; and we think that we understand you as far as you have gone."

"Very good: you will not be troubled to understand what I am now about to say. Do you know what prophecy means?"

"Yes, sir. When a person tells of what will happen, a long time before it does happen, that person is called a prophet, and what he tells is called his prophecy."

"True. And if the thing really happens, as he said it would, it will prove,—what?"

"Why, that he told the truth; and, that somehow or other, he knew beforehand what would happen."

"How could he know beforehand? Can you tell what will happen fifty years from this time?"

"No, sir."

"Can any being tell?"

"Yes, sir; God can tell, for he knows every thing; and no other being but God does know."

"Very good: then if a man tells truly what will happen, God must have put it into his mind; for no being but God knew any thing about it. Is this so?"

"Yes, sir; it seems to be so."

"It certainly is so, my children. And therefore when men tell *truly*, a long time beforehand, what will happen, it is proof that God is on the side of what they say ; for if he did not help them, they could never tell."

"That is plain enough, Uncle Philip."

"Very well, then ; it shows, too, that what they say is on the side of *truth*, for God would never help any man to prove a lie, you know."

"Certainly not, sir."

"Now, then, into how many parts is the Bible divided ?"

"Two, sir ; the Old Testament and the New Testament."

"Right : and who had the Old Testament before the New was made ?"

"Why, you said, sir, that it was all the Bible that the *Jews* had."

"Yes. The Jews had the Old Testament. Now this Old Testament has a great many books in it, just as the New has : and some of these books were written by prophets, and in them they tell of a great many things which were to happen long after they were dead."

"Yes, Uncle Philip, I know the names of

some of those prophets. There was one named Isaiah, and another named Jeremiah, and there was Ezekiel, and Amos, and Zechariah, and a great many others."

"That is all true. Now, among other things which these prophets wrote was something about a great personage who was to come, and be distinguished among the Jews: he was to deliver them from their troubles, and many things were to happen to him, and they called him the *Messiah*."

"And what does that word mean, Uncle Philip?"

"One who is sent as a messenger or an ambassador. I told you what an ambassador is."

"Yes, sir."

"Well, the Jews always believed that this great personage would come, as their prophets had said he would; and as it is written by them in the Old Testament that he would: and now I wish to show you that there are certain things written by these prophets of the Jews about their Messiah, which have happened exactly as they said, *to our Christ*: and no history in the world mentions any

other person to whom such things did happen, except our Christ."

"Then you think, Uncle Philip, that our Christ was their Messiah?"

"I have no doubt of it."

"Uncle Philip, will you tell us how long before they happened, were the things written by these prophets about the Messiah?"

"They were written at different times; but all of them hundreds of years before Christ came."

"Stop, Uncle Philip, stop, if you please. There is one thing which I have just thought of, and I should like to know something about it."

"What is it?"

"Why, you know that *after* a thing had happened, men might write a book, and say in it that such a thing would happen, and then pretend that their book was very old, and written hundreds of years before the thing took place."

"They might, possibly: but it would be very difficult for any man to write a book now, and then make people believe that it was many hundred years old. But in this case we are very sure that the books of the prophets

were written long *before* Christ came. Remember that these very books were a part of the Jews' Bible, and therefore they took the greatest possible care of them. They even counted the words and the letters in them, to prevent people from changing them in any way: and even now, at this very day, there are Jews with these very same books in their possession, and they take the greatest care of them. So that I think we may be certain they are right: for the Jews would not alter them; and if Christians had tried to do it, so as to put in a prophecy *after* the thing had happened, they would have been found out by the books which the Jews had."

"I see it now, Uncle Philip. The Jews had these books before Christ came, and have them yet; so that Christians could not get hold of them to alter them."

"Yes. And now, to make these prophecies plainer, and to show you that the things mentioned in them did happen to Christ, I last night wrote them down by the side of each other, on a piece of paper, and Susan Markham may read them for us. Here they are, Susan."

(Susan reads)

I. It was foretold *where* the Messiah should be born.

PROPHECY.

Thou Bethlhem, Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel. Micah v. 2.

FULFILMENT.

And Joseph went up from Galilee with Mary, his espoused wife, unto Bethlehem; and while they were there, she brought forth her first born son. Luke xi. 4-6.

II. It was foretold that Messiah should be a *Prophet*.

I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee. Deuteronomy xviii. 18.

The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. John iv. 19.

A great prophet is risen up among us. John vi. 14.

This is, of a truth, that prophet which should come into the world. John vii. 40.

III. It was foretold that Messiah should begin to preach in *Galilee*.

In Galilee, of the nations, the people that walked in darkness have seen a great light. Isaiah ix. 1, 2.

Now, when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee, and began to preach, &c. Matthew iv. 12-17.

IV. It was foretold that Messiah should be *betrayed* by one of his own followers for *thirty*

pieces of silver ; and that with this money the potter's field should be purchased.

Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, who did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me. Psalm xli. 9.

So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. Zechariah xi. 12.

And the Lord said unto me, cast it unto the potter : a goodly price that I was prized at of them ! And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord. Zechariah xi. 13.

Then Satan entered into Judas, being one of the twelve. Luke xxii. 3.

And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. Matthew xxvi. 15.

And the chief-priests took the silver, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Matthew xxvii. 7.

V. It was foretold that Messiah should suffer *pain and ignominy*.

They pierced my hands and my feet. Psalm xxii. 16.

I gave my back to the smiters. Isaiah l. 6.

I hid not my face from shame and spitting. Isaiah l. 6.

Pilate took Jesus and scourged him. John xix. 1.

The soldiers platted a crown of thorns and put it on his head : and they smote him with their hands. John xix. 2, 3.

And they spit upon him, and smote him on the head. Matthew xxvii. 30 Mark xv. 19.

VI. It was foretold that Messiah should be *mocked and derided*.

All they that see me laugh me to scorn ; they shoot out the lip, saying, He trusted in God that

While Christ was on the cross, they passed by deriding him, wagging their heads, and

he would deliver him; let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him. Psalm xxii. 7. 8.

saying, He trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him. Matthew xxvii. 39, 43. Mark xv. 29. Luke xxiii. 35.

VII. It was foretold that Messiah should have *vinegar* offered him to drink; and that his vesture should be disposed of by *lot*, and his garments *divided*.

In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. Psalm lxix. 21.

They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. Psalm xxii. 18.

And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. Matthew xxvii. 48.

They parted his garments, casting lots upon them. Mark xv. 24.

Then the soldiers took his garments and made four parts, to every soldier a part. John xix. 23.

VIII. It was foretold of Messiah that not a *bone* of him should be broken, and that he should be *pierced*.

He keepeth all his bones, not one of them is broken. Psalm xxxiv. 20.

They shall look upon me whom they have pierced. Zechariah xii. 10.

When they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs. John xix. 33.

But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side. John xix. 34.

"Well, my children, these passages will be sufficient, I hope, to show you how what the prophets had said should happen to their Messiah, did really happen to our Saviour, Christ; and I could show you a great many more."

"Uncle Philip, in how many cases would what they wrote about their Messiah agree with what happened to Jesus?"

"In about a hundred cases: and it is a very remarkable thing that there should be such a wonderful agreement, if these things were not really meant of Christ. One or two, or even more, things might have happened to him, which would agree with what the prophets had foretold; but I cannot think that if he were not the person meant, *one hundred* things would have been found in his life to fit so exactly with the prophets' writings. But there are more prophecies of another kind, if you would like to hear them."

"What are they, Uncle Philip?"

"Why, our Saviour was a prophet himself, and there are many things which he foretold, written in the New Testament; and they happened just as he said they would. Would you like to hear a few of these?"

"Yes, sir."

"He foretold that his disciples would all forsake him.

The hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone. John xvi. 32.

Then all the disciples forsook him and fled. Matthew xxvi. 56.

"He foretold that Peter should deny him.

The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice. John xiii. 38.

Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest; and immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. Luke xxii. 60.

"He foretold that after his death, he should appear to his disciples.

I will see you again. John xvi. 22.

After I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. Matthew xxvi. 32.

The eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them, and when they saw him, they worshipped him. Matthew xxviii. 16, 17.

"And so there were a great many things which he foretold. He said that one of his own disciples should betray him: and he told them, before it happened, which one it would be; he told them, also, that he should be put to death, and the place of his suffering, also; so, too, he told them by whom he should suffer; and that he should be mocked, and spit on: and every thing happened as he

said it would. But there was one very remarkable thing which he foretold, and the Jews and the heathens, in their own histories, are obliged to confess that things happened as he said they would."

"What is it, Uncle Philip?"

"It was the destruction of the city of Jerusalem. Christ said that many remarkable things should take place just before the city was destroyed, as you may see in Matthew xxiv., Mark xii., and Luke xxi. And now let us inquire whether these things did happen.

"I. Christ said that many false Messiahs should appear.

"Josephus was a Jew, and wrote a history of his own nation, and he tells us that there were many persons who pretended that they were sent by God, and deceived the people. And he mentions in particular, that a false prophet, an Egyptian, led thirty thousand men into the desert, where they were nearly all put to death by the Roman governor. This account is in Josephus' History of the Wars of the Jews, book ii., chapter xiii. He says, too, in another place, that 'the country was filled with impostors who deluded the multi-

tude.' There was a man named Theudas, who boasted himself to be somebody, as the New Testament informs us: Josephus says that this man persuaded many of the people to take their goods and follow him to the river Jordan: he said that God had sent him, and that he would command the waters of the river to divide, and give the people an opportunity to pass over on dry ground. And he tells us also of many others who pretended to be sent of God; but I suppose these will do."

"Yes, sir."

"II. Christ said there should be wars and commotions.

"Just before Jerusalem was destroyed there were terrible wars in the Roman dominions, and the quarrels for the place of emperor were so great that four emperors were killed within eighteen months, as Josephus tells us. Besides this, where the Jews and people of other nations lived together in the same city, they rose up and fought each other. At Cæsarea, the Jews and Syrians fought, and twenty thousand Jews were killed. Josephus says, that in every city, the people were divided into two armies against each other. At Alex-

andria fifty thousand Jews were killed, at Damascus ten thousand, and so in other places ; the wars were dreadful.

“ III. Christ said that there should be famine and pestilence.

“ In Acts xx. 28, there is an account of a famine which was foretold by a man named Agabus ; and there are two writers, named Suetonius and Tacitus, who tell us that this famine took place in the reign of Claudius Cæsar : and Josephus says that a great many people in Jerusalem starved.”

“ Uncle Philip, were Suetonius and Tacitus Christians ?”

“ Oh no : they did not believe in Christ any more than Josephus did. There was pestilence too, Josephus says, throughout all Judea.”

“ Well, Uncle Philip, all this seems to be truly wonderful.”

“ Yes ; but I have not done yet, there are more wonderful things still behind.

“ IV. Christ said there should be earthquakes.

“ There is an old writer named Philostratus, and he says, that about this time there were earthquakes in Crete, and Smyrna, and

Miletus, and Chios, and Samos. Tacitus tells us that there was one at Rome about the same time ; and he also says, that in the reign of Nero (who was one of the four emperors killed within eighteen months, as I told you), the cities of Laodicæa, Hierapolis, and Colosse were overthrown ; and the celebrated city of Pompeii was almost demolished by an earthquake.

“ V. Christ said that there should be fearful sights and signs from heaven.

“ Now hear what Josephus says :—A star hung over the city of Jerusalem like a sword, and a comet continued for a whole year. When the people assembled in the temple to worship at the ninth hour of the night, there shone so great a light about the altar and the temple, that it was as bright as day ; and this continued for half an hour. The eastern gate of the temple, which was of solid brass, and so heavy that it required twenty men to shut it, though it was fastened by strong bars and bolts, opened of its own accord, and could hardly be shut again. Before the setting of the sun, the people over all the country saw chariots and armies in the clouds fighting. When the priests, at the feast of Pen-

tecost, were going at night into the temple, they heard a voice, saying, *Let us depart hence.* There was a common countryman who ran up and down the streets day and night, crying, '*A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the temple, a voice against the bridegroom and the bride, a voice against all the people.*' The magistrates had him whipped; but still he cried, '*Wo, wo to Jerusalem.*' At last, when he was crying, '*Wo, wo to the city and the people, and to the temple; wo, wo also to myself;*' just as he spoke the last words, a stone fell and struck him dead on the spot."

| "Uncle Philip, these things are most wonderful: can they be true?"

"They are indeed wonderful; Josephus himself says that they are so strange, that they would be hard to believe, if there were not so many who knew them to be true. I believe them for three reasons."

"What are they, Uncle Philip?"

"In the first place, Josephus is a writer of good character and credit: he is not commonly supposed to have written falsehoods. In the next place, in his account of these

things he does not hesitate to say that a great many people saw them, and knew them to be true ; so that he does not seem to fear their contradiction. And in the last place, Tacitus gives pretty much the same account. This is what he says : ‘There happened several very wonderful things ; armies were seen to rush together in the heavens, arms were glittering, and suddenly the temple was made bright by a light from the clouds ; the doors of the temple were suddenly thrown open, and a voice, greater than human, was heard, saying that the gods were departing.’ ”

“ Well, Uncle Philip, these seem to be very good reasons for your belief.”

“ So I think. But suppose these things did not happen, even then enough did happen which Christ foretold, to leave no doubt in our minds. There were many other particulars which our Saviour mentioned, but we have considered enough. And now, my dear children, what do you think of the evidence from prophecy ?”

“ Ah, Uncle Philip, it is just as plain as any which has gone before it.”

“ And what do you think of the Christian religion now, is it true ?”

"True! why, Uncle Philip, I was satisfied long and long ago. You have made it plain, so that I could understand it; and I, for one, am very much obliged to you."

"Yes, and so are we all, Uncle Philip."

"Then, my dear children, I am very thankful. All I wished was, that you should know something about it for yourselves, and therefore I took such parts of the proofs as I thought might be made plain for you. There is a great deal more which might be said, were you older: and which would make it plainer still, but when you are older, you can read large books about it, and then you will know as much as Uncle Philip does. And now, as we have found out that the New Testament is true, you must remember these things:—

"I. Reverence the Word of God.

"II. Study the Word of God.

"III. Obey the Word of God.

"Now, to understand it and obey it, you need God's help, which he is willing to give to those who will ask it for Christ's sake. Therefore, my dear children, if you wish the New Testament to be of service to you, you must pray that the Holy Spirit would be pleased to help you in understanding and obeying it.

And here is a short and beautiful prayer which I learned from the prayer-book of the Episcopalians: and in this prayer I think all good men will be very willing to join. I always like to use it just before I read the Bible.

“‘Blessed Lord, who hast caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.’

“Now go to my housekeeper, old Margaret, she has a cake for each one of you, and after you get it you may go home.”

THE END.

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